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spectrum



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There's been a lot of talk in recent years about microchip technology and the way it is changing our lives. Many sociologists have likened the microchip revolution to that of the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. At that time invention and development was very much in the hands of inspired people, greed not playing an unimportant role in the inspiration! The Victorians have teft us a large legacy of institutions funded by that wealth. But what most characterised the period was the strength of the individual spirit. In so many respects the computer games market echoes that spirit.

LUDI

It is a market in which entrepensurs and talented people can flourish, and have done. Britain has been particularly rich in individual effort as regards gemes software. As in the 19th century, what started as a coltage industry has grown into a major business. Only the time scale has aftered—two years ago it barely existed, the tip of the iceberg being the tiny classified ads in the new computer magazines.

Of course the development of microchips and microprocessers has been in the hands of corporations, usually American, certainly not 'a cottage industry. But it is the efforts of individuals which has made so much software available: And no advance has been as spectacular as that of Spectrum games.

It would be easy to dismiss the development of games software as a frivolous side Issue of little importance in the general scheme of things. Yet the director of a well known software house that also does commercial software development, told me that in his opinion some of the best programmers in the world are to be found writing games for the Spectrum. The skills they have had to develop would put those of programmers in what might be

called the more serious market to shame.

Marketing pressures and theincreasing sophistication of the games market, have inevitably forced most of those early cottage industries into much bigger concerns. Yet the spirit remains and it is a sign of the strength of that spirit that completely new companies like Gargoyle Games of Birmingham can emerge with a game as sophisticated and impressive as Ad Astra (which is reviewed in this issue). So as owners and user of the ZX Spectrum, we can feel proud to belong to a tradition barely out of the cradle that yet has achieved astounding things. And don't think that because you may only be a player of games that you haven't had a lot to do with that achievement. Nothing is worth anything until it is used as it was intended. A game cannot exist without a market to purchase it, and it dies without the feedback the market offers. The feedback Isn'i only financial, it's also an emotional spark which finds its way back to publisher and author Because of that vital interest in good games we can now look at an astonishing range of programs of high quality

### WALKING THE PLANK

Sadly, a lot of this is at risk. Because producing computer games is a financial business, and development, marketing and duplication costs can be very high, software houses need all the revenue they are supposed to receive from the sale of their games. The cancer rotting in the heart of the British software industry is Piracy.

According to GOSH (Guild of Software Houses), piracy of software is costing the industry £100 million a year! Some estimates have put the figure higher. Of course the percentage

of that figure made up by Spectrum software is much smaller, but the scale is still staggering. Commercial piracy probably doesn't affect the gamesmarket to a worrying degree, though there have always been the rip-off merchants and 'Bring and Buy' boys at the trade shows, who can offer brand new games at less than trade prices. One such notorious offender has been the bearded young gent who trades ZX Microfairs in London under the name of Chichester Discounts, and who was seen on on occasion handling large quantities of an EMAP publication, Your Robot at a recent ZX fair. These people do damage, but it's not irreparable.

The most serious damage is done by the public themselves. It has become fashionable to run computer clubs as copy clubs. We are told that schools are hotbeds of software copying, user groups actually run mini production lines at their evening meetings and can steal as many as 2000 copies of successful individual titles at one go. According to Imagine

Software seven copies for each legitlmate product sold one ba legitimate product sold can be considered as realistic. At this sort of rate it is easy to see what a 'harmless' little activity like getting together with a few friends to copy some games is doing. The outcome is sadly obvious. Small software houses with very in-demand games are the most susceptible to the cancer, but even the biggest can't escape the consequences of the financia slump copying causes. The logical conclusion is that games software for the Spectrum will cease being produced.

Is this what we really want? It's known as killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

The computer press has also to bow its head in shame, or perhaps it has only paid lip service to the software business seeing it as a good source of advertising revenue and nothing more – just put a few games reviews in to keep the punters buying! In the grapple for advertising revenue, magazine after magazine has offered space to pirates and discount clubs, which usually

disappear after a couple of months of ads have resulted in the desired response to those three famous games for 99p. They have also allowed the most blatant of classified ads to go in, offering copying services, and even cheap copies made from original tapes.

### PIRACY "CONDONED" BY COMPUTER MAGAZINE

There's obviously a conflict of opinion about piracy between some of the computer magazines and the software industry which largely supports the publications with their advertising revenue. If editors of magazines continue to turn a blind eye to the situation, then they will only have themselves to blame when the revenue dries up because games companies can't afford to advertise any more.

advertise any more.

The most blatant and astonishing case of editorial idlocy recently came from the March issue of COMPUTER CHOICE magazine. In his editorial Bill Bennett admits to copying programs for back up reasons, wilfully ignoring that so many back up copies are sold in their thousands by pirates. He sees nothing wrong with this, says it can't be stopped, and offers this comforting crumb of wisdom: "Furthermore, there is no better advertisement for a company's next game than a well-loved, constantly played copy of the previous game, even if it was pirated."

He sets out by saying, 'Software companis are for ever moaning about software pirates... They complain that the activity is robbing them of profit, While there is no doubt that such activity does go on, it is not anything like the amount of harm that the moaners

suggest.

Bill Bennett, Computer Choice and Business Press International have evidently looked into the matter a great deal more thoroughly than the software houses to make such assertions. Equally, they would no doubt be

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happy for user groups to buy one copy of their magazine and then distribute thousands of illegal copies free of charge. At the same time, Computer Choice, like a number of other computer magazines, effectively condone the activities of pirates by allowing the advertisement of copycat programs. It must seem strange, then, that software houses continue to advertise with magazines when this is the official attifude.

### HAM PIRATES

Mike Fitzgerald, of A&F
Software, evidently does not
share Bill Bennett's
happy-go-lucky attitude to
software pirates. Mr Bennett in his
editorial admits to the possibility
that, 'only half the copies in
circulation are "official". Mike
Fitzgerald considers Imagine's
claim that for every one copy sold
seven illegal ones exist, isactually conservative. And he has
good reason to believe his figures
rather than those of (the
well-informed) Mr Bannett.

As a result of information placed before A&F by a radio ham, Mike Fitzgeraid has uncovered a conspiracy on the air waves of staggering proportions. Mike claims that software houses are currently losing between £5,000 and £20,000 per litle, a total loss conservatively amounting to £28 million a year, through the transmissions of games software over the air waves between British

radio hams.
Approximately 50 software houses whose programs are involved include A&F, Anirog, Addictive, Bug-Byte, C.R.L., Melbourne House, Micromania, Ocean, Quicksilva, Silversoft, Vortex, Virgin, Imagine, DK Tronics and many others. Games readily available and free of charge include any major title you can think of. So far a total of 416 Spectrum games have been listed as being regularly Iransmitted

between radio hams.
Dublous at first of their
Informani's claim about air wave
piracy of software, A&F set up a
monitoring station of their local
area, and within one hour
recorded off-air the transmission.

of software data for four well-known games. Convinced of the necessity for putting a stop to this activity, A&F have now instigated the setting up of a chain of monitoring stations around the country. As a result of their local station they are pursuing injunctions against approximately 30 people within a 50-mile radius. The Department of Industry.

The Department of Industry, which licences private radio hams, says that there are some 50,000 licensed operators in Britain. The terms of their licence strictly forbids the transmission of copyrighted material or any entertainment material. We are going to shut these people down, says Mike. 'They think they are modern Robin Hoods, but they are read'.'

Mike is also well aware that some of the worst pirates are school leachers and school children, but the scale of radio piracy has made the software business aware that their very livelihoods depend on putting a stop to it as soon as possible argument often offered that if the orice of software was lower then piracy would die out seems spurious, Mike thinks. 'The price per play of a game on a home computer has to be pence, compared with the 20p or more required for an arcade machine. he says. He also points out that if piracy was stamped out then sales of games cassettes would rise by as much as ten times, which would immediately knock £1 to £2 off the current prices anyway.

Perhaps the only bright from in the whole thing is that the biters are also getting bit; copycat programs which most magazines have allowed to be sold through classified ads in their pages are now also being 'pirated' and transmitted through the alrowaves by radio harns! But then we've always known I hat there's no honour among thieves.

In common with a lot of other very committed software specialists, Mike Fitzgerald feels strongly that one of the saddest aspects of software piracy is that it is killing off not only a vital entertainment Industry in its infancy, but, more important, also killing off an industry which is able to employ a great many young people who otherwise face a life on the dole. Unfortunately it seems that too many of the computer magazines who are where they are today because of the software industry are content to sit back and let it happen—they've made their money.

Software producer **Abacus** has told us that they have developed a cassette tape protection system

for software. Three months ago, a similar idea developed by Jim Lamont was jumped on by the Ministry of Defence. Jim Lamont's system operated on the bias signal placed on any tape by a recording machine, but details of its operation are now top secret after MOD acted to seize all information relating to the copyright protection device he had designed.

Cathy Shaw of Abacus tells us that their system is nothing really new, merely an adaptation of something which is already in use, but which no one had thought of using in connection with preventing illegal copying of software from tape to tape. Abacus too have been jumped on by the MOD, which appears to be worried about any form of tape protection, but unlike Jim Lamont, Abacus seem confident that they will be cleared to go into production of the unit within six weeks. Cathy said that samples had been tested by several people who had tried to copy software programs which had been mastered using the protection system. While a copy was possible, it would not load properly or run, and the general impression was that this device really would work effectively

Cathy Shaw, in common with many producers of games software, has campaigned for some time tomove the authorities into action against the pirates, and she is aware that the most serious threat to the British software industry comes from computing clubs and schools. In one instance she cites a teacher who has happily confessed to making an easy £500 a week from selling illegal tapes of games to his school children. If the British authorities in charge of schools are going to continue allowing this kind of freedom, one which often extends to the school copying educational programs for use in several classes to continue, then they deserve everything a work recession can throw at them.

In the and, only one thing really matters, and we must all ask ourselves the question very seriously. Do you want to see the home computer games market fade to nothing? If you have any interest in writing games programs you might want to market them – but what market will be left? It is time to wake up to the fact that every stolen copy of a game is damaging the very market that has given, and can continue to give, so much enjoyment for really very little cost.

### **Trashy Gossip**

Flicking through the pages of a cynically up-market publication, whose name escapes me for the moment – Personal Computer Games I think it's called – I was fascinated to read a snippet of gossipy inconsequentiality which suggested that CRASH is a down-market magazine which cares nothing for objectivity. This because of an article on programmer Steve Turner written by Andrew Hewson (Turner's games are published by Hewson Consultants). This point may have had some validity had we hidden the writer's identity.

What's surprising about the plece in Personal Computer Games (April 1984) is that another computer title should obviously feel so threatened by CRASH as to resort to cheap smear tactics like this, and it wouldn't even rate a mention it those tactics were only confined to the scribblings of an unimportant hack. Unfortunately they have extended to advertisement executive of PCG spreading flasehoods in public, a matter I can't go into here, unfortunately.

It's all supposed to be jolly fun,
I'm sure, with the writer jokingly
forgetting the name of CRASH
and substituting TRASH instead—
after all, I could repeat a name I've
beard on several lips which says
that the initials PCG realty stand
for Pukingly Cruddy Garbege—
but it doesn't really get our
respective readers very far. As for
down-market—at least CRASH
attempts to offer readers what
they want to know, whereas PCG
(Your Complete Guide to Micro
Entertainment) offers very little in
the way of objective or detaited
reviews and more resembles a
cynical exercise in marketing (187
pages, 67 of editorial including
program listings, compared to

CRASH: 128 pages, 88 editorial).

PCG is tosing its grip if it feels
the need to sink to gutter press
tactics like this against other
magazines.

ROGER KEAN

### **ERRATUM**

Due to some inexplicable error in typesetting, Derek Brewster was stated as the author of MC Lothlorlen's Micromouse Goes Debugging in last months's issue. We apologise to all concerned. The author is in fact Steve Hughes.

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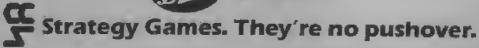


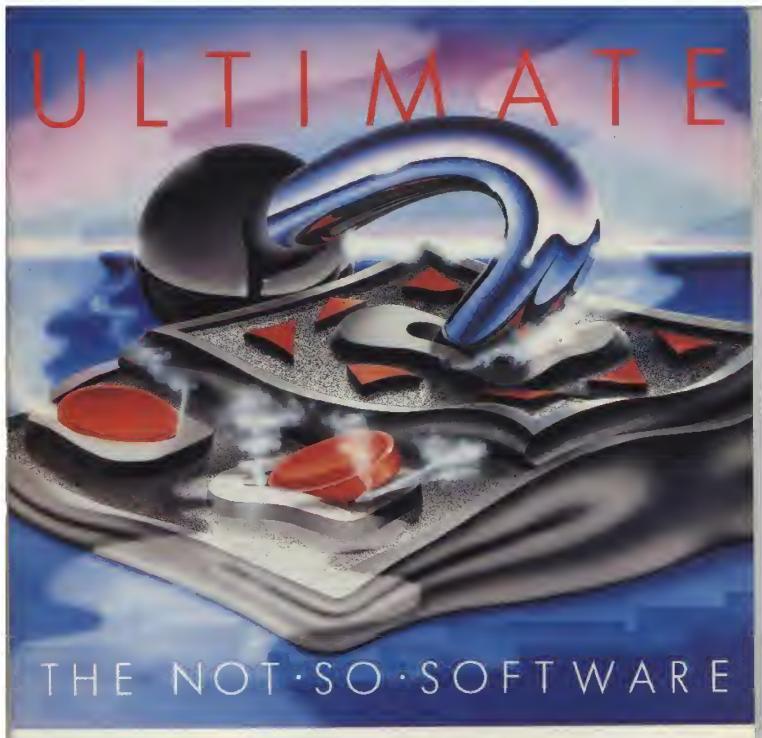
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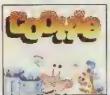
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It is unusual to have one software house releasing two really excellent games at the same time, but that is what Software Projects have just done. Manic Miner's followup, Jet Set Willy, is obviously destined for the top of the charts, and its almost guaranteed success may well overshadow the second game, which would be a pity. So, congratulations to Software Projects.

### **Jet Set Willy**

Producer: Software **Projects** Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95

Language: machine code Author: Matthew Smith

There were rumours that Matthew Smith was a figment of the Liverpool computing mass psyche, or merely a clever code name for a Tandy computer. There were rumours that Matthew Smith didn't really exist, and that if he did, then Jet Set Willy didn't and wouldn't. So, after all the and wouldn't. So, after all the waiting, was it worth it? In fact, it's probably worth'ess even reviewing Jet Set Willy, since by the time you read this you will probably have already worked out the boots to cheat the game!

The rags-to-riches story is already well known. Rich from his sub-Surbiton mining exploits, Willy has bought a huge mansion with over 60 rooms, most of which he has never seen. There's been a mammoth party and the guests have left the place in a dreadful mess. Willy just wants to go to bed, but his housekeeper, the nighmarish Martha, won't let him until every bit and piece has been picked up and tidled

away.
It is always difficult to do a sequel to a best-seller. Not only should it have the same style, it should be bigger and better. Jet Set Willy seems to score on all counts. Very sensibly, it is actually a very different game to Manic Miner, much more of an adventure in which the player can move freely between the linking rooms and work out the structure of Willy's strange house. In keeping with a good adventure, there are some random elements that have been thrown in. In some rooms the hazards may change places, or disappear altogether. Some rooms may not be entered from a particular direction you lose all your lives, and sometimes that does not happen. In all respects, the creation of all the rooms is exceptional, each with its own



peculiarities. Some of them are very hard to solve.

Software Projects have included a complex colour code with the inlay, which must be looked after at all costs, since the game will not run without a correct code entry after loading is completed.

### CRITICISM

'I consider this game not as a follow-up to Manic Miner, but as something quite different, it has a totally different game structure, more interesting graphics - like the swinging ropes that are highly realistic, hobbing rabbits, deadly razor blades, wobbling jellies and endless other inventions. Not a single graphic has been taken from Manic Miner, with the exception of Willy himself, now in a natty hat rather than his mining gear. Quite simply, the sound is excellent, the graph-ics are brill and the colour is great. A classic

'If Manic Miner was mad-

dening, frustrating and fun, then Jet Set Willy should certainly be put on the Governproscribed ment's list of drugs. The cynical manner in which you are given so many lives to play with is just typical of the extraordinary talent of Matthew Smith - mean through and through! I thought, well with so many lives it must be easy to get a long way. Yet they just disap-pear before your very eyes. The detail of the graphics is marvellous. The dreadful Maria with her pointing hand of accusation, the flickering candles, the grinning heads, the leaping security guards, just everything has been worked as far as it can go. If there's no demo in this game, it is because it would spoil the



### JET SET WILLY

### TRIBBLE TROUBLE

fun of exploring the huge mansion, and besides, I doubt whether there's a nibble left in the memory, let alone a spare byte before tea. Now I must get back to The Banyan Tree and try again for the tenth damned time in a row to get through. . . . .

"Jet Set Willy is a high point in the development of the Spectrum game. I hope there will be others, maybe ones of a different kind, but I'm sure nothing will top this game for addictivity, fluent graphics, responsiveness and sheer imagination. The nightmare quality of the events suggests its author should be receiving therapy. Instead, he's probably getting rich. Good luck to him..."

### COMMENTS

Control keys: alternate keys row Q to P left/right. SHIFT to SPACE for jump Joystick: pointless having one, keyboard is much better Keyboard play: highly responsive, but watch the tight spots, which have been purposely made as finicky as possible

Use of colour: excellent Graphics: perfect Sound: excellent Skitt levels: how nimble are your fingers? Lives: 8

General rating: to date, one of the most addictive and finest Spectrum games.

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	96%
Playability	94%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	98%
Value for money	99%
Overall	95%

### Tribble Trouble

Producer: Software
Projects
Memory required: 48K
Retail price; £5.95
Language: machine code
Author: Jim Scarlett

Jim Scarlett wrote the very good *Doombugs*, which was published by **Workforce** and seems to have been rather underrated. That was an originat but fairly simple game to play. Tribble Trouble is a highly original game and a very difficult one to play.

For those who remember the Star Trek series, it may be possible to recollect an episode called 'The Trouble With Tribbles.' Tribbles were cuddly, cute but rather troublesome creatures that began multiplying on board the Enterprise until they posed a serious threat to the ship. In this new game they are still cute and cuddly and even more of a menace. The hero of the piece is Brian Skywalker (yes, Luke's little known brother), and he's a Tribble Farmer on the planet Noom. When on a mission to round up wild tribbles, his Noomrover runs out of fuel and Brian is forced to herd his tribble back to base on foot.

This trek takes him and his tribblesome herd through five sheets of sheer hell. In the first, Brian is stranded near his

Fortunately, they are fairly obedient-ish, and will follow Brian if he's near. This lets him lead them up and pop them back into the top of the Noomrover.

In sheet two, The Goofer Desert, the tribbles eat goofers but are killed by cacti, and Brian sometimes gets caught up too. Then there's the Spheroids' cave. Spheroids, too, like tribbles, and in the Snappers' Lair, the Snappers like tribbles, while the tribbles run off everywhere after the mushrooms. In the last screen you must get all the escaped tribbles back into their pen before the air runs out. In fact the only 'good' thing about this game is thaat for once you can play the part of a hero who is practically indestructible!

### CRITICISM

'Keeping tribbles out of trouble is a very difficult task, as they seem to enjoy exploring a denotes a gem to be dug for, whilst keeping the next emerging tribble out of trouble, takes all your concentration, when a gem is dug, a rock pops up somewhere else that may be nuged into the river. All the movements in the game are delightfully done, and the pixel movement graphics are first-rate throughout. Compelling and enjoyable.'

"I had to break off to get the review done, but there are still three screens to fight through before this game is conquered, and even then I will have to go back. All I can say is if tribble farming is this much trouble, I think I'll stay here and play computer games! Excellent sound, colour and graphics, an excellent game and very unusual too."

### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/Z up/down, I/P left/right and zero to 'dig' Joystick: Kempston



Brian Skywalker shepherds a tribble out of trouble, builds a bridge of stones and goes quietly mad.

Noomrover at the toot of Firebug Mountain, beside a river which he must cross. Gems sparkle occasionally, and then he can dash up and dig out a rock, nudge it into pos-ition and fling it into the river. The first stones sink down, so he has to make two lines of three rocks on the bottom, and then another two rows of three on top. When this is done, it will be possible to take a tribble across to the next screen. The problems, however, are soon manifest. Tribblesome trouble starts when the tribble, never content to stay in one place, start to emerge from the Noomrover. The Firebugs that live on the Mountain like eating tribbles, so they start to move in. Tribbles also run straight at the nearest water and drown. great deal, unaware of what hazards are around them, or what Brian is doing. All the figures in this game are detailed and very well animated. Every screen is colourful and enjoyable to play – which doesn't mean the game is easy; in fact it is difficult and will take ages to get through. The tunes are excellent as well. It's a MUST BUY!!'

Brian Skywalker stands every chance of becoming a Spectrum hero. He is simple in shape, nicely drawn and immediately likeable, like Miner Willy or Horace. The trible, though much tinier, are also beautifully drawn and animated, and look suspiciously like mini Brians. On the first screen, keeping an eye out for the brief twinkle which

Keyboard play: good, very responsive Use of colour: excellent Graphics: ultra-smooth, detailed and very fast Sound: excellent, great tunes Skill levels: 1 Lives: 3 Screens: 5 General rating: excellent, highly recommended.

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	91%
Playability	92%
Getting started	86%
Addictive qualities	93%
Value for money	92%
Overail	91%

JET SET WILLY is finally in the shops, unlike MANIC MINER Jet Set Willy is what Software Projects call a TOTAL GRAPHIC ADVENTURE in which graphics and not text are the only guides you have to guide Miner Willy around the 60 rooms of his mansion. In-association with the game we are offering a prize for the first person to collect all the items around the mansion and put Willy to bed (not an easy task). Walking around the rooms seems easy enough, collecting the items may prove, in some cases difficult, but to make the adventure almost impossible is the Aftic.

Once you have visited the Attic your very presence will trigger a chain reaction in the Chapel. The four guardians from there will then go to the Kitchen, West of the Kitchen, Cuckoo's Nest and the East Wall Base making short cuts through them impossible as you will encounted instant death when entering the rooms.

the bedroom.

Happy Adventuring.

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# = Reviews=

### Mission 1 (Project Volcano)

Producer: Mission Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £6.95 Language: BASIC Author: Stuart Peart

Fancy yourself a top-notch secret agent, well versed in the arts of self-defence and investigative intuition? Then Mission 1, an adventure that seems to be the first in a series of missions from this new company,

might appeal.

The package is presented in a novel way. The cassette is glued to an ominous manifla envelope which contains a passport, briefing sheet, brief outline map (top secret) and useful hints including a previous agent's last message from Inside a top secret enemy missite command centre. It is now your task to penetrate this installation. Once inside, you must locate the main computer room and nobble it by entering a destruct code to be found somewhere in the complex.

Once started, the adventure follows the standard graphics adventure formula with a picture of the location on top of the screen and the text beneath. Type in HELP and you get a list of 11 basic command words and their understood abbreviations. In keeping with most long adventures, it has a SAVE

routine.

You enter the complex through a ventilation shaft, and if you're clever enough to get past watery and electrical hurdles, you find yourself on the first floor of the command centre, a set of corndors with rooms off. The search for the code can now commence.

### CRITICISM

Mission 1 is a fairly standard adventure. Ithought the graphics rather basic, lacking detail, and they made the wait for them to build up a bit boring. Unfortunately the text descriptions were no more atmospheric either. Response to input is slow due to the BASIC, and very limited in its understanding of words. Not exactly a James Bond Mission."

'A neat adventure for begin-



ners I would think, though lacking in excitement and things to do. Because of this, when you meet with the immoveable difficulty of entering a lift to the second floor you might very well give up rather quickly.

"A slightly overpriced adventure for what you get, it's a pity the software doesn't quite match the excellence of the packaging and accessories. More options on how to complete the obstacle course and more atmosphere would have helped. But I did find it oddly compelling in a frustrating way. It's very simplicity made the biggest difficulty I encountered seem even more difficult to solve when the answer must have been so obvious. I couldn't help liking it and feeling friendly towards it despite its shortcomings. Enough, anyway, to look forward to their

next Mission in the hope that it's a bit more developed on the text and action."

### COMMENTS

Response: fairly slow Graphics: generally line over coloured background Features: excellent packaging simulating a dossier for secret agents General rating: an excellent idea spoiled to some extent by the actual program.

60%
40%
55%
80%
50%
60%
58%

is unexciting - not a patch on the original. Basically, I did not like it.'

There are quite a few versions of 'Panic' now for the

There are quite a few versions of 'Panic' now for the Spectrum, but none match up the quality of this one. The keyboard is very responsive, there is a good use of colour and the graphics are fast, smooth and the sound is great. The monsters are incremented by two with each screen successfully completed. All I can say is that this is the best 'Panic' for the Spectrum with all the features of the arcade original. A very active game.'

sion of 'Panic.' The graphics are very simple and the game

### COMMENTS

Control keys: 6/7 left/right, 8/9 up/down
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive, but Sinclair keys are not the best arrangement
Use of colour: good
Graphics: fair to good
Sound: very good
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
General rating: above average

Use of computer	58%
Graphics	60%
Playability	68%
Getting started	64%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	65%
Overall	63%

### **Sheer Panic**

Producer: Visions Memory required: 16K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code Author: Kevin Bezant

This game deserves a few percentage points in its favour just for the inlay cover design, possibly the most vivid and accurate description of a 'Panic' game ever seen!

Sheer Panic is a conventional 'Panic' with five floors, the bottom one of which is undiggable. Your man carries a very long shovel with which to dig his holes into which, hopefully, the three monsters encountered on the first screen will fall. As is customary, monsters getting out of holes turn another colour and then have to be knocked through two holes, or even three holes in a row. The game is played out against a background of falling oxygen. Between lives as well as games, the layout of the ladders is changed.

### CRITICISM

'The game seems to lose its addictivity after a couple of hours playing, probably because there's no change in the idea. Also, the keys are very inconvenient, so a joystick might be better. Fair graphics on the platforms and ladders, but the aliens aren't so good.

'This is a fairly typical ver-

	scint=carses	% mr 1
K		
0	er-sais (	



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### **Ad Astra**

Producer: Gargoyle
Games
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £5.95
Language: machine code
Authors: Roy Carter, Greg
Follis

Gargoyle Games is a new company situated in Birmingham, and Ad Astra (To the Starst) is their first game, It's

quite a debut too.

This is an arcade space combat game which features large graphics, depicted in a very solid three dimensions with perspective. There are 20 segments, with each segment being made up of seven phases. At the start of each phase and after a lost life, large planetoid-shaped asteroids hurtle trom the depths of space at the player's ship. These cannot be shot. but must be dodged. As the tast of these is vanishing under your ship (hopefully), alien craft appear as dots in the distance and then swoop down on you firing bolts. Five different types of aliens attack in eight different formations, firing two types of laser bolts at you.

This is followed by a large mine layer, which crosses the screen, loosing streams of rotating mines. These should be blown up as soon as possible because it they blow up themselves they fire off bolts at you, which come across the screen, making two directions filled with flying weaponry. Then come the spinning saucers, also firing at you. These need to be hit several times before they really blow up.

The last phase is a Way Station. Before the sixth phase starts, a security code appears for the next Way Station, and as the station appears, the player must input the correct



3 Dec-er than 3D, fully animated shoot em up in Ad Astra.

code. An incorrect entry results in loss of a life. A correct entry results in a welcome message and an extra life.

The screen display is full of different coloured stars. Your ship is a large V-shaped craft, which is able to move all over the screen, and is equipped with rapid fire laser bolts.

### CRITICISM

The first thing to hit you in the eye with this game is the stunning graphics. The 3D effect is quite strong, especially on the asteroids, which not only come from the distance to sweep hugely past you, but are shaded as well. The rapid fire from your ship makes a fireworks display if you fire and move rapidly about the screen. The graphics

move very smoothly and very fast, which is just as well, because all the craft, yours and the aliens, are very big. Dodging planetoids, aliens and laser bolts can be done using the perspective. You can nip upwards and sail over the top of something. This all takes quite a bit of practice. With its superb graphics, speed and mass of alien weaponry, Ad Astra is a difficult and addictive game to play."

'The 3D graphics are extremely well detailed - the moons especially so, with shading, craters and even a rotational effect as they roll towards you. Your ship is very manouvrable and lires really well. The explosions are particularly good: large, detailed and effective. They reminded me of cartoon film animation. It's addictive because you want to get through the next stage to see what they will throw at you next.'

The rotating moons move towards you at increasing speeds depending on what stage you have reached in the game. These are very well animated. Aliens appear in the distance and zoom in on you, but not very smoothly, as they basically go through two stages, dots, then full sized, moving down the screen. On the second screen, however, the yellow rotating aliens move very well towards you. Moving on to the third screen, the graphics are slightly more basic; the large minelayers are

quite simple, though nicely drawn, but the rotating mines work well. Exceptionally addictive at first, but after a couple of hours play this wears off.'

### COMMENTS

Control keys: Alternate keys bottom row left/right, second row=down, thid row=up, four corner keys will fire, alternatively the cursors may Joystick: Kempston, ZX 2, AGF, Protek Keyboard play: responsive Use of colour: very good Graphics: generally excellent, with effective sense of perspective Sound: average Skill levels: progressive difficulty Lives: 6 Features: one- or two-player games General rating: addictive, attractive graphics and very playable.



Use of computer	85%
Graphics	80%
Playability	84%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	75%
Value for money	78%
Overall	80%





### **Orc Attack**

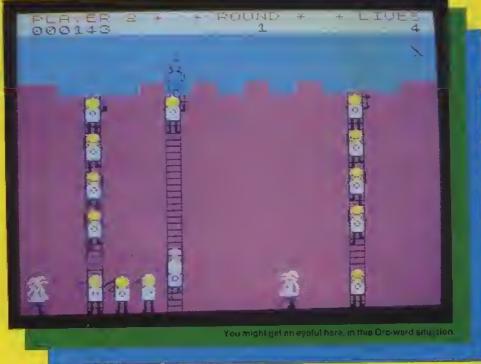
Producer: Creative
Sparks
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £6.95
Language: Machine code
Author: Phil Snell and
Dean Lock

This new release for Thorn EMI under their new imprint, Creative Sparks, is a clever reworking of the 'Siege' theme The fearsome army of Orcs besieging your castle, are now mounting a frontal attack. Your weapons are rocks, swords and boiling oil. The screen shows the walls of the castle with its battlements and you at the top. In either top corner is a symbol identifying the type of weapon available, and to the corners you go the collect them. In the first stage a large force of ores start mounting ladders to climb up and you may hurl rocks down at them. These must be thrown between the battlements, so it is made difficult by the fact that the ladders are often placed in a position where you can't

throw rocks down, easily.

As soon as the ladders are erected the orcs start climbing. Others at the base of the wall fire cross bow bolts at you. When an orc reaches the top, your weapon automatically changes to a sword and you can swipe away at them. The orcs hammer at the battlements, eroding them. If you are hit (in the eye), you lose a life and have to get another weapon. These are not unlimited. Boiling oil (when it's ready) may be poured down on the attackers, causing a conflagration that destroys them

When this is done, the evil sorcerer sends his spells up the wall, and these skull shaped things may be bombed by rocks. This returns you to another orc and ladder attack. Surviving this will lead to an attack by giant trolls who appear in thin air, and then come the Stone Warts, who again try to scale the wall under your hail of rocks.



### CRITICISM

'At first glance, Orc Attack looks a bit simple – how wrong can you bel The animated detail is amazing. As they march on, the army of Orcs are all doing different things, loading cross bows, firing, building ladders, climbing them and spon. There can be as many as fifteen at a go, all trying to get you. 'You' are nicely animated too, and an arrow in the eye is really quite original, and owes nothing to any game I've ever seen. It's very playable, very addictive and well made. I would definitely recommend it.' Fantastic – that's all!

'Another unique game from Thorn EMI with some fantastic animation. At first impression it didn't seem very addictive or very playable, but it turns out to be quite, the opposite. The game is very fast and busy. Excellent graphics and use of colour. I can guarantee you'll get some laughs out of this game. Highly recommended by me!"

### COMMENTS

Control keys: 6/7 left/right, Ø to fire
Joystick: ZX 2, Fuller, AGF,
Kempston, Protek
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: excellent
Sound: good
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 4
Lives: 9 (you need em)
General rating: Original,
addictive, highly
recommended.

Use of computer
Graphics
Getting started
Playability
Addictive qualities
Value for money
Overall

90% 90% 92% 95% 96% 82% **91%** 

### 3D Lunattack

Producer: Hewson Consultants Memory required: 48K Retail price: £7.95 Language: machine code Author: Steve Turner

The latest in Hewson's attempts to convince an ignorant world that life as we know it will soon cease to exist unless we turn our attention to the threat of the SEIDDAB, is also the best yet. The ideas author Steve Turner started to develop in 3D Space Wars, improved in 3D Seiddab Attack, have now come to full fruition in this latest program (unless he's got more ideas stuffed up his sleeve).

The game requires you to fly a mission in your 25 Luna Hover Fighter against the Selddab command base. This is protected by three rings of defense. The first consists of robotically controlled DAB tanks which fire missiles at your craft and they can be destroyed by laser fire. The second ring is a mountainous area seeded with aerial mines, set to explode in your proximity.

These may be shot with your lasers, or dodged around. An exploding mine will rock your craft and deflect its course. The third zone is studded with self activating SEIDDAB missile siles, which may be attacked with your lasers. If you penetrate the command zone, many straffing runs will be required to destroy the base while avoiding its heavy defensive fore power.

At any time you may be attacked by Seiddab hover fighters. Your craft is also armed with air-to-air missiles which will destroy the enemy fighters before they come into range, although when they are sighted the lasers must be used. Weapon selection is automatic, below the horizon it's lasers, above it's missiles.

The complex screen display is a cockpit view, not unlike that in Seiddab Attack. Out of the cockpit windshield you can see the horizon of mountains, the various details of the enemy craft in solid 3D, the crosswire sight of your weaponry and the illuminated radar display. This switches on automatically an hover fighter detected. It places a small box near the enemy location and a set of decreasing figures showing range to sighting. At this stage missiles may be fired and forgotten. Below the viewscreen is the instrumentation showing fuel, armament type in use and hull temperature, which increases to a critical point with each enemy strike. A message display informs you of the zone entered and enemy activity. This is also given ver-bally if you are using the Currah Microspeech unit.



As yours is a hover craft, the left/right keys after direction, but the up/down keys raise and lower the weapon sight.

An additional treat is the recording on tape immediately after loading. To hear this you simply unplug the EAR socket on the recorder and sit back. Alternatively for those with Currah, just turn up the telly volume and listen to the instructions on playing the game as related by the mission commander to 'you'.

### CRITICISM

Steve Turner has managed to pack an amazing amount of program and game into this. The display is wonderful, the best three dimensional "Battle Zone" type game yet. It is seen at its best when a missile takes off from the ground silos, and can literally dash past your windscreen, as it turns in its trajectory to head straight at you. Neat touches like the radar warning display "projected" up onto the windshield canopy are marvellous. Also useful is the navigation system. Placing the gun sight at it lowest position prompts a

series of short straight lines to appear, which guide you into command base. This is essential when you are on your final straffing runs, as several are needed, making you constantly circle the base for another go. Really excellent, most playable and addictive too."

You light the battle against the Seiddab again, but don't form any opinion from 3D Seiddab Attack, for this is totally different and utterly amazing! Three dimensional graphics storm towards you at a terrific speed, and it's all so realistic. Your hover craft handles just like a real fighter would - I think. Skill and accuracy play a major role in this shoot em up game. The Spectrum seems to have been pushed to its limits, although Steve Turner will no doubt have a go at pushing them further still on the next one. Graphics are fast, smooth and detailed, and atthough colour has been well used, it doesn't have a major function. No unnecessary instrumentation has been put in, it's all essential to half unit, it's all essential to half unit it's all essential to tial to help you win. It's highly addictive and I think it will take

a long time to get tired of."

All the detail in this game is excellent. As your craft turns the horizon sways to match the banking effect. When your hull overheats, the screen turns blood red, then the nose of your craft dips, and the ground seems to rush up to meet you. The graphics throughout are fast and very smooth, well used 3D effects, especially the ground missiles. Even the half sphere of the Earth can be seen hovering just above the mountainous horizon as you head for the command centre. The cursor keys may not be in the best layout, but surprisingly, they seem to work quite well here, despite the speed of play, possibly because one set operates direction, the other set the sight. The sound is also very well used, and powerful if you have a Currah unit. I could almost swear the 'you' on the recording at the start is Sean Connery playing his James Bond role. 'Marvellous.'

### COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors, with 0 to fire

Joystick: Kempston, Datel ZX 2, Protek, AGF Keyboard play: very responsive Use of colour: good Graphics: excellent, fast, smooth and detailed 3D Sound: good Skill levels: 1 but completing mission results in an increase in difficulty Lives: 3 Features: special sound recording on tape, 1 or 2-player games, Currah Microspeech compatible General rating: Highly addictive, complex shoot em up. Excellent value and highly recommended.

Use of computer	80%
Graphics	92%
Playability	89%
Getting started	95%
Addictive qualities	89%
Value for money	92%
Overall	90%

# ORC ATTACK-Can you survive...?

CREATIVE SPARKS

Your castle is under siege from the vie Orc hordes. They mount if fenzied attack, scaling the castle walls with ladders, firing their fethal crossbows.

To defend yourself, you hurf rocks from the parapet onto the Orcs below. If an Orc reaches you, dagger in hand, you grab your broadsword and leap to the attack. Your ultimate weapon is a huge vat of boiling oil that you mercilessly pour over the hapless Orcs.

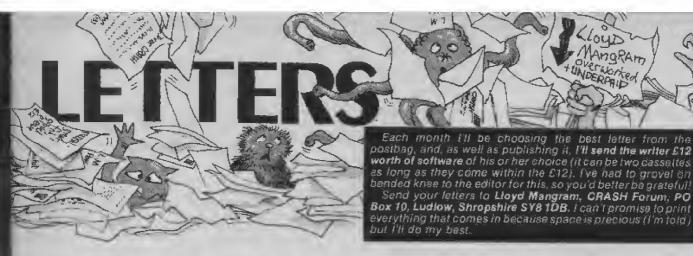
This brings but a brief respite...out of thin air a Sorceier appears and you have to pit your wits against his evil spirits. Only after fighting the living dead, the Stone Warts and the Demon Trolls. « will you be safe.

Ore Attack is available for the Spectrum 48K and any Atari computer. You should find Ore Attack in any major software retailer. (And it carries an offer of a free poster of the original oil painting featured on the pack.)

£6.95

FOR SPECTRUM 48K

CREATIVE SPARKS



Once again we've received a massive mailbag of letters – far too many to be able to print even a fraction. However, to get in as many readers' comments as possible, I've been through loads of letters and taken fragments here and there. Don't forget, we give a prize of £12 worth of software to the writer with the best letter each month. This month there are two letters which I considered worthy of calling 'best' letters. As you

may imagine, this has caused severe consternation in the finance department, not to mention my Editor having a fit. Two letters getting a prizef' he exclaimed. As you all know, I'm not one to cringe before editorial wrath, and I stuck to my guns. Fortunately he never reads the magazine, so he'll (hopefully) never notice that the first letter isn't all that complimentary . . .

### ODE TO A SPEELING BUG

While reading through you software guide, I became repeatedly aware, Of many luny speeling mistakes

Which are dotted here and there.

It starts to be annoying, I was stomping up and down, So I'm just writing to let you know, That these errors abound.

I worked for days to seek them

The dreaded little buys, Through programms and programs, scoils and scroils,

To note down all the pigmies.

There were tioms it got hypnotic, And I nearly did collapse, You must be talking pirateese, Talked by the priate chaps.



One time I almot lot congrol, For I was getting nowehre, The drawbacks were enormous, As my face turned magneta,

But finally I reached the end, And saw realtly, But time files, and it was atainst me, I had to hurry,

Am I being unconventinal In writing this little ditty, I wanted to be cinematic, and write diagrmatically.

So then I sought my ababous, And other mathematical instrumetris,

to find out aboutkyour exrabonus,

For expecially locquacious letters.

Is your magazine salvagable?
Or being anihilated?
Only you can chose, you're in the basting position,
Is hy-oh Quicsilva away outdated?

With complements, Mark Harvey (aged 13), Tadcaster, N. Yorks. Reference CRASH No 2 (March)

My spelling was never much to write home with, Mark, but even I know that you spell compliments with an 'i' and not an 'e.' Still, just to prove that grovelling doesn't always pay, that E12 worth of software on its way to Mark – don't call us, we'll call you.

### **BUY A COMPUTER**

Dear Sir,

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed the first issue of CRASH. I think it is very important to read reviews before buying games and to print a picture of the display is an added bonus as it gives a better idea of the game than reading the inlay, which is not always truthful.

always truthful. I hope in future issues you print a HELP page for Adventure feaks like myself. In the past year I have been transformed from a cabbage-brained housewife to a logically thinking mind-blowing Adventure maniac! I have finished four of the five Artic adventure series and am only two weeks into the fifth. I have also played Invincible Island, Urban Upstart and Mountains of Ket. all of which I would give high ratings, especially Mountains of Ket, which is the only one to get me stumped (I scored 99% but could not get past a Zombie in the end - any help

on this would be appreciated!

My only other suggestion for your magazine would be a pge for young users, as in my experience there is very little to interest the very young. My own two girls (nine and seven) are both eager to input programs from magazines but usually find them much too long.

Finalty, I would say to all women at home finding themselves unfulfilled, 'Buy a computer!' and start an exciting a pay behin.

exciting new hobby.
Your sincerely, Mrs M.
Henson, Leicester.

AS you'll probably see from this issue, Mrs Henson, we are doing a bit more for Adventurers now, but the best help comes from other readers exchanging information —so feel free. Meanwhile (another?!), £12 worth of software on its way to Mrs Henson. Some of our next letters also had things to say about Adventure games...



I'm desperate. I've just bought the adventure game Black Crystal, and I have read the booklet more than once, but i still don't know what on earth I'm meant to be doing. Map 1 was hard enough, but by accident I stumbled on two rings and made my way to the castle – then il gets hard, In Map 2 I have no idea of what to do. And without this know-how the game is wasted as far as I am concerned.

Colin Warner, Letchworth, Herts.

Anyone know the answers? The next reader obviously doesn't....

### **BLACK ZXTAL**

I would like to complain about Carnell's Black Crystal. The cover is very deceiving. It says that Black Crystal is an epic role-playing game. When I read this and the pamphet inside, I paid out £7.95 and eagerly rushed home. As soon as it loaded, I cringed at the graphics. Surely this is not what the 48K Spectrum is capable of? Apart from being a bore, the graphics are extremely poor, and the game itself is almost exactly the same as the ZX81 version.

I would like to congratuite Legend on Valhalla. This ingenious adventure has resulted in many hours of enjoyment, with killing innocent characters like Mary, who pops up everywhere and gets in the way. I think Valhalla is twice as good as that boring game, The Hobbit. And !





criticise the percentages given in the February Issue of CRASH. I found the game extremely addictive and excellent value for money. I think your cross-eyed reviewers need to play it again. The only thing I need to know is how to find Ofnir, the first quest in Valhalla. I have spent ages searching in vain. Can anyone tell me?

Well, can anyone? I'm alraid our cross-ayed reviewers obviously won't be much help...

### GOING THE WRONG WAY

Dear Sir.

Thanks for a great magazine. What a refreshing change from all the others full of goblidigook. I bought a 48K Spectrum for the kids (and myself) for Christmas, and we are hooked on lots of games. But I don't know if we're thick or something, I don't think so, but we cannot get on with the adventure inca Curse After the first two locations we are at a loss for something else to tell it to do, apart from

We recently borrowed another adventure, Greedy Gulch, and were a bit more successful, but still found ourselves going round in circles. Are we going about these sort of games in the wrong way? If you have any suggestions I would be pleased to hear them

Yours faithfully, Bernard Moseley, Conisborough, Doncaster.

Without knowing in more detail how it is you actually 'go about' them, it's a bit hard to say much. We are now having a regular Adventure column, so perhaps some tips and hints may emerge from that for you.

### **TITLE SCREENS**

Dear CRASH,

Many thanks for publishing my letter (March), t'm just writing to tell you that I actually bought a brand new portable colour TV from Currys, It's their own make, Triumph 8028, I'm very pleased with it as it works very well with my Spectrum. Anyway I'd love to know how most

software houses produce title-pages for their games which come up while the game is loading. Especially games produced by Ultimate. which produce an exact picture of the cover. But doesn't this take up loading time?

By the way, do you have any plans for producing a binder for holding issues of CRASH as this would be very useful?

Yours, Karl Flaschke (14), Wembley, Middlesex.

Glad the TV worked itself out all right, Karl. The answer is YES, title-pages do take up loading time. That's all, they don't take up any memory which the game needs. While the picture is being produced, nothing else is happening. Title pictures are produced in a variety of ways, sometimes by a utility like Melbourne Draw, sometimes by drawing out the graphics on graph paper and then via machine code directly on to the screen. This is done by loading the memory area of the screen, and you can usually see the picture building up. Some companies now use the clever method of having the PAPER and INK colours the same during loading of the Screen, so it all remains white instead of building up the black first. That way they can alter the attributes at the last second and immediately a full colour picture seems to appear. In fact it's been there all the while, but you can't see it because it is effectively white lines on white paper. As to the binders, the answer again is YES. Details should appear somewhere in this Issue (if I haven't been mislead - again).

### CRASH

LM

Dear Lloyd.

bought issue 2 of CRASH today, and two hours later t dented my car on a pillar in the car park. Is this a record?

Yours falthfully, Roger French, Shepperton, Middlesex.

You're supposed to play arcade games on the TV screen and not in the local car park. What is the car, by the way, a Morris?

### **KEY CHEATS**

Thank you for the new magazine that you have published. I purchased one for my grandson, and I found the contents to be excellent,

It appears that it is the 'in thing in schools to collect as many programs as possible and, whilst it is illegal, they are all busy making copies. If when reviewing programs you published the keys used in the game, with the above in mind, if would probably create more interest in your magazine and boost your sales. When the programs are exchanged often the information passed over is scanty, so copies of CRASH can be bought to fill this gap. I know it is unfair to the software houses for this activity to be going on, but it is human nature to do it, so why not capitalise on it to boost your sales?

D.H. (address not given).

We do, of course, publish the keys used in a game, and you aren't the first person to point out that we might do it to help the illegal copiers of software. A moment's reflection, and most people would recognise that this is silly. Any semi-intelligent games player can sort out the keys to control a game after a few minutes' experimenting, so we're not doing much there to help. Our aim is to give a clear picture of how the game is played without use of a joystick so would-be buyers can better make up their minds whether they like a control key arrangement. As to human nature, well the more schools copy games and the more the copy clubs get together for an evening's swapping of illegal games, the less likely it is that there will be decently produced games about for them to buy to copy in the first place. Their choice, I suppose.

### A ROUND SUM

I was very impressed with your first issue of CRASH, so I couldn't wait for the next issue, especially after I saw your advert in Popular Computing Weekly (Feb. 16-22) offering 10 Jet Set Willy tapes to be won. However, I have looked from cover to cover but cannot find the competition referred to.

Giles Taylor, Exhall. Coventry.

Giles, the competition, as such (dreamed up by some madman in the publicity department, no doubt) wasn't actually in the March issue of CRASH. On the PCW ad it

said, 'Somewhere "around some" isn't. Where is It?' The Idea was to search through Issue 2 and find the bug created by some typographical error (Mark Harvey, poet extraordinary, would have approved, no doubt). In fact the answer was to be found on page 94 of CRASH, Issue 2, in the article about W.H. Smith and their computer shops. Intro paragraph, line 9: This month our roving reporter took a whirlwind trip a round sum of W.H. Smith's bigger computer shops.' Get it? Well, a few people did actually, Sorry to hve been so obscure. Sometimes our publicity department leaves one simply speechless . . .

### RATINGS - ARE THEY FAIR?

Dear CRASH,

I have been a dedicated arcade games player for some years now (comes of being raised in Blackpool!) and since I bought my Spectrum I have been a dedicated computer games player. I do have limited funds though, hence you can see how pleased I was to see CRASH.

Enough of the praise. I have a critical eye and tend to take seriously only those programs which get over 80% on your ratings. But you seem to have a marked bias in the ratings in favour of arcade games. What about Hunter-Killer, 1984 and Paintbox - all top-quality products without top-quality marks? What will you do to Apocalypse? Perhaps that's unfair, but perhaps you should separate the reviewed products into sections and have a game-of-the-month in each section - arcade, adventure, strategy, utility and educational. Also, on the point of the CRASH HOTLINE. couldn't you allow bracketing of some games as joint tops they could be enjoyed for different reasons. Oh, I had a whole speech prepared. Never mind. Congratulations. If I only had enough money for one magazine a month CRASH would be the one. (PS. Did you know that on level 25 of Deathchase the bikes shoot back?)
David Emery, Victoria

Park, Manchester,

Our ratings have caused some comment, and it is a problem. Our Editor (his

blessed name be praised) didn't want any ratings on the reviews, believing in his infinite widsom that the written word alone should suffice. In my (humble) opinion, the ratings are fine, but they should be taken very much into account with the review itself. One advantage of having several different reviewers per piece is that you tend to get a more balanced view - the disadvantage is in the ratings, where one dissenter out of three reviewers obviously lowers the average figure for each heading - that should really be heavily borne in mind. But the majority of readers clearly do like to have some sort of rating system. I'll be interested to see the results of our Questionnaire from Issue 3 (April) - have you filled yours in yet? That might throw some light on the retings system.

Please could you tell me how you decide what rating to give a program? Surely to decide between 83% and 84% for something like 'Getting Started' must be a little difficult to say the least!

G.G. Harvie, Tiverton, Devon.

It may look rather areane, but as the tigures arrived at are made up of an average of three persons' opinions, it's not so odd. Also there may actually be more difference

than one point, as we stopped using 1/2% after the first issue. so 821/2%, for intance, gets rounded up and 84.4% gets rounded down.

Of course, all reviewing and criticism is to an extent affected by personal bias, but your standard reviewing format, with overall ratings, seems to give a sensible and fair assessment of

every game. Neil, Talbot, Bromsgrove, Words.

I was interested in your ratings at the end of each full review, but how about a rating for beginners? It could point out such things as: Is the game too fast (arcade) for beginners?; too complicated (adventure); instructions too complicated, etc.

Brian Longstaff, Sheffield,

I would like to say that I have noticed that your magazine and other such mags sometimes say, 'A game not for the amateur arcade game player, etc . . . I think that is wrong to say since you are under-estimating the poer of a new or not so new games player. You could say you are being prejudiced. Another thing is your reviewing system. I disagree with percentages as marks, since a game I like you regard as a failure. You don't say so, but the percentage marks make

up for lost words. This is just a mere morsel of complaint and I can safely say I will trust all, well nearly all, of your reviews.

Jason Savage (13),

Acocks Green, Birmingham,

arm intrigued to know how CRASH gets hold of all the games it reviews. Does it buy them up, or are they given by the various software houses? If you buy them I can't see how all the games can be bought and such a great magazine be produced from a meagre 75p. an issue.

J.L. Griffin, Hayling Island, Hants.

Neither can the publisher! Still, we try. In most cases the software houses send us 'review copies', but there are quite a few who aren't sufficiently organised, or perhaps they don't like us enough, to send review copies through. Then we buy them up. LM

I decided to enter your reviewers competition. What a job! it was the hardest competition I've ever entered. I didn't realise what your poor reviewers were going through. Please forgive my remark about your reviewers' mistakes (deleted for fear of a reviewers' strike - LM) because now I can sympathise with them. They have obviously started

desperate bid to get some

sleep. . . John Buttin, Blackpool,

Nobody here noticed they were awake in the first place. Still, enough of the problems tacing reviewers...

### FACING BACKWARDS

Dear CRASH.

What is the average life expectancy of your reviewers? Why do I ask? Well imagine the scene - your reviewer driving down a busy motorway at 70mph - he looks in the mirror and sees a police car moving up on him. He thinks. If the police car is coming towards me I must be in reverse. Help! I'm going backwards!

With lightning reactions, he swerves to avoid the police car and ends up under the wheels of a 20 ton lorry -

CRASHII Don't be silly, I hear you

say. Funny, that's just what I said

sabotaging the magazine in a We can now offer a limited number of Back Copies to readers who may have missed out on CRASH issues 95<sup>p</sup> each (includes postage) Don't wait-they're in short supply! Please send me CRASH issue No.\_ Name Address Postcode l enclose € BACK NUMBERS CRASH PO BOX to LUDLOW SHROPSHIRE SYSTDB



John: "Yes with ZZOOM one of the big problems was getting the graphic perspectives right, for example the line on the road gave a reference point but to achieve real 3D and animation and also ensure that all the objects increased in size realistically was a pain, for example the Extron missile spins toward you and increases in size at the same time, a big problem. Mind you the hardest part was working out some way of not running out of memory in about five minutes flat . . . that must have caused you some sleepless nights with Alchemist,"

lan: "Yeh, with so many scenes I had to find some way of compressing everything, so I designed the scenes two screens wide then by experimenting with quite a few techniques managed to find a way of getting each line down to just a few bytes of memory; but you're right getting everything into what, in these days, is a relatively small amount of memory caused big problems. In the old 8K PET days the Spectrum's 48K was a lot, but now . . . well . . .

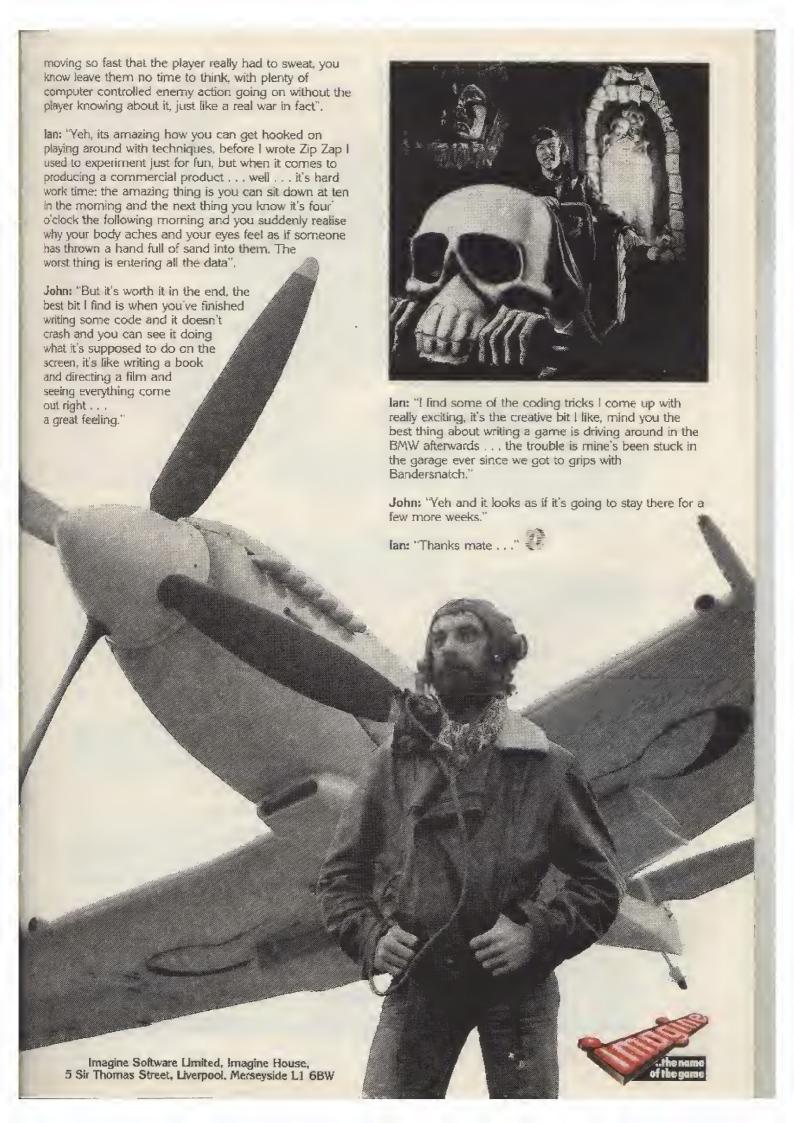


time I'd written the raw data I'd used up 21K so bang. goes half your memory . . . so it's thinking cap time ... remember we got together on that one."

ian: "I'm not likely to forget . . . but we cracked it in the end."

John: "Right, but then I had the problem of making Stonkers not only a classical wargame but also a game that could be played and enjoyed by arcade and adventure fans as well. I had to get things





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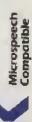
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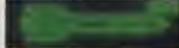
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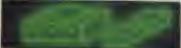
### AERIALMINES

ontain proximity fuses, explodes on detecting hoverfighter. Susceptible to laser strike.



### MISSILESILO

inal line of defence - self activating. Hewstron Warhead. Susceptible to laser strike,



### COMMAND BASE

our objective - heavily defended requires many strikes to destroy - you must not fail.



### Code Name Mat

Producer: Micromega Memory required: all of 48K

Retail price: £6.95 Language: machine code Author: Derek Brewster

'Mission: Alien termination — the desperate plan to place in the mind of a teenager the combined tactical skills of all the planetary leaders in the solar system. MAT is mankind's last hope.... Now your mind is Mat's mind. Take control of the Centurion and blast off on the greatest adventure of all.....

H=000

F

 $\mathbf{U} =$ 

Mat are in command.

How to describe the game? As we said in our preview feature last issue, a starting point might be Star Trek games, but only as a convenient departure point, for Code-Name Mat has gone boldly further, resulting in a game of arcade action combined with real simulation which calls for a number of different skills, in brief: Myons are attacking Earth, starting from the outermost planets of the solar system. This divides the game up effectively into sectors which equate with the planets Pluto, Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and Earth. The Myons tend to attack a planet and attempt to reduce it to rubble which will be used to increase the numbers of their attacking fleet. In the last event, it is better to destroy a planet yourself than to let it fall into Myon claws. The solar system is seen on the Solar Chart.

The second chart is the Sector Scan, a 10 x 7 grid which

VIEW

ABORTEO

FRONT

INE



'Now your mind is Mat's mind. . .

of the craft, Failure to achieve the transition will result in the Centurion ending up in some other sector. Travel between planetary systems is done by navigating through one of the two **stargates** in much the same way.

Long Range Scan is a 3D global representation of your area of space. The Centurion is seen as a dot at the centre. This is one of the most amazing aspects of the game, and one of the hardest to get to grips with. A craft disappearing behind you will reappear ahead. If you loop the loop the

range, Object number, Shield Status, Tracking Computer Status. When the Tracking Computer is on, it will automatically switch between a forward and reverse view from the ship to face any object being tracked, such as an enemy lighter, and you always fire in the selected direction.you are up against three types of enemy craft: Fighters, which will attack as soon as you enter an area containing one, Cruisers, will only attack when within a range of 3,000; Base Stars (nicknamed hamburwhich will attack immediately. If their shields are worn down, hamburgers run away for two minues until the shields are regenerated.

The Myon attack continues once the game has started quite independently of your actions, unless you stop them, of course, and it takes a great deal of skill to contain their movement through the solar system. Your instrumentation is vulnerable to damage, which can leave you blind, but parking in orbit around a planet will result in a drone coming up to meet you. This refuels and repairs all damage:

If you wish to play with full strategy options, then selecting the second mode, Commander, means that you are also in control of Planetary Defence Fleets. These can be moved about and used to help in the battle to great effect, opening up a whole new game. Fleets are communicated with via the Subspace Transmitter.

To describe fully the complexities of Code-Name Mat would take a volume, and this introduction only scratches the surface of the game.

# wo aw shi on qui act of de mo sys is vica ing res

The Green Hills of Earth thank you for saving mankind from the Myon threat,

Inlay cards usually leave something to be desired when describing a computer game, but considering the scope of Code-Name Mat, Micromega's is almost terse. For decades the Myons have sought to dominate the Solar system and they have launched an all-out attack, knowing that Earth has developed a revolutionary new Unfortunately craft. there is only the prototype, USS Centurion, and you as shows the position of the main planet, any satellite bodies like moons, positions if Myon fleet units, your own defence units (more later) and positions of stargates (red – outer system/ cyan – inner system). Travel between sectors within a planetary system is done by means of a warp gate. A cursor can be moved to the desired sector and then the Centurion must be piloted (using the view screen) at the gate which will appear in tront

display will rotate vertically as if you were looking down through a revolving cylinder, To play well, you must master your scanner.

Instrumentation and its use is very critical, flying by the seat of your pants alone will not suffice. Instruments provided at the base of the view screen are Energy (basically a strength factor – when it reaches zero – you're dead), Velocity, Angles from a tracked object both vertical and horizontal, Object

### CRITICISM

'Although there are loads of keys and functions to get used to, you do find that they are all very useful, and it doesn't mean that you can't start to play immediately. The graphics have hit a new high for the Spectrum; they are extremely fast and you are

given an amazingly realistic 3D view and they are varied as well. I like the way that even if you have lost your engines through enemy action, there is still a way of limping to a planet for repairs by keeping your linger on the thrust key. This causes the engines to "stut-The planets are all drawn very well, as are the drones that come to refuel the Centurion. This game is well balanced between strategy and arcade and there is a lot of interaction between computer and player. Forward planning plays a major part too. I don't think I can find any way of tel-

'Amazing 3D graphics! Enemy craft really do come from hundreds of miles away until they zoom over your shoulder. Only the planets are a bit jerky as you approach, but then, with so many of them and in such good detail, and only 48K that's not surprising. It is obviously going to take a long time to plumb the intricacies of Code-Name Mat, and that means high addictivity, helped along by the exciting space battles and tremendous playability. If there's anyone out there who doesn't like this game, perhaps they should go back to Ludo.



ling people to buy this game that would be sufficiently adequate dust buy it!

quate. Just buy it! First impressions of Code-Name Mat are territying. Not only are there a lot of screens to cope with, but also a lot of keys, although joysticks may be used. But despite appearances, this turns out be to a user-friendly game and. despite its complexity, it isn't one where you seem to get lost in space like so many other similar games. Mind you, I can't think of another game to really compare it with. You might just have climbed into a space ship and hurtled sky wards, it's all so realistic. All the graphics are superb, and the instrumentation is essential to successful playing. Perhaps the only "cheap" effect in the whole game is the stargate warp effect, with its flashing colours. The 3D is not only effective it's also varied. The Long Range Scan is a really exciting development. Realism is even taken to the degree that when the forward view flicks to the rear, the keys, of course, after their left/right function, which can be confusing at first. The depth of the game will ensure that it is played for a long time to come.

### COMMENTS

Control keys: 6/7 left/right. 8/9 up/down, Ø fire: Engines: 1/2 decelerate/accelerate, 3 decelerate to full stop, go to cruising speed, 5 go to full speed (not available with cursor joysticks): W warp drive, D shields on/off, A tracker, T transmit subspace, F front view, R rear view, L long-range scan, S sector scan, C solar chart Joystick: AGF, Protek, Kempston, ZX 2 Keyboard play: instantaneous Use of colour: well used Graphics: outstanding Sound: continuous, well used Skill levels: 2 in effect, although they make for different games, and in addition there is a short game, full game with medium sized attack fleet, and full game with full-scale attack fleet Lives: as it should be - only 11 General rating: out of this world!

Use of computer	88%
Graphics	95%
Playability	94%
Getting started	98%
Addictive qualities	92%
Value for money	93%
Overall	93%
O s e all	33/0

## Reviews

### Crash

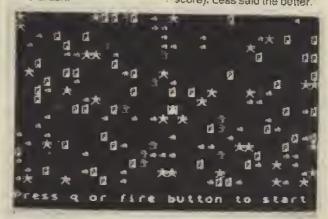
Producer: Mogu! Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.50 Language: BASIC Author: Mark Larner

When we first saw the advertisement which mentioned Crash, we were quite excited, thinking that someone had named a game after us! Expectations that it would be a good game were soon dashed however. Mogul may be better known for their Commodore software, and one hopes so, because these few games they have for the Spectrum are simply not up to scratch, let alone Crash.

response in the keys, the colour isn't very bright and the sound is pathetically weedy. There are better things to waste your money on than this.'

'Crash exhibits all the characteristics of a very BASIC game with poor, slow block graphics, slow reading of the control keys, and a completely undeveloped idea. Its only saving grace is user-definable keys, but that's a bit like putting silk gloves on a pig's foot.'

I can't think Crash is seriously meant for the arcade game playing addict, perhaps for his very young brother. The game offers nothing in the way of graphic delights and less than nothing in the playing (it can even give you a minus score). Less said the better.



Small characters chase each other in search of a game.

Crash is a primitive driving game in which you guide a car around the screen, which is crowded with green lumps of cargo for which you get points, blue petrol pumps which keep you going longer, purple mechanics who you're sup-posed to avoid, and red and red houses that can be fatal if hit. The object is to clear the screen of all the cargo. Depending on the skill level selected, you may run over a few mechanics without losing your life, but too many will result in their taking action against you for dangerous driving. On higher levels of play, a single mechanic may prove fatal. It might all have been interesting if it had been worth it in the first place.

### CRITICISM

'I can't believe a game like this is being marketed today. It is very boring, unaddictive, pointless and a waste of time and money. The car is not easily controlled due to lack of

### COMMENTS

Control keys:
up/down/left/right –
user-definable
Joystick: Kempston, or
almost anything via UDK
Keyboard play: very slow
Use of colour: fair
Graphics: poor, simple blocks
Sound: poor
Skiff levels: 10
Lives: 1
General rating: a waste of
money, may have some
appeal for younger children.

Use of computer	52%
Graphics	28%
Playability	20%
Getting started	58%
Addictive qualities	15%
Value for money	25%
Overall	33%
1111	THE.
CANA PAR	2/2

# The Time Machine

Producer: Digital Fantasia Memory required: 48K Retail price: £9.95 Language:

Author: Brian Howarth

The Time Machine is one of Digital Fantasia's series of adventures which use text and graphics to neat effect.

You are a local reporter in this one, finally getting to grips with a truly challenging assignment – strange goingson have been reported from the fog-shrouded moors. A Dr Potter has recently purchased a lonely house out there, and since then strange lights and sights have been seen by locals round the eccentric scientist's abode. All this causes a lot of concern, and you are sent

your getting inextricably stuck in the early stages and giving up altogether, as with so many other adventure games.'

'What's good about this game, as with others by the same company, is that you have the option of switching between text only and graphics included mode at the press of the ENTER key. This avoids the waiting time for the pictures to form (which they do quite quickly) should you be impatient to get on. Descriptions are short and to the point. Computer response time is fast and jolly, creating a nice relationship between player and machine. There is pienty to do on this quest if you succeed in getting out of the fog at the beginning.

'Time Machine lives up to its

Time Machine lives up to its expectations beautifully from the stylish graphic scene setters to the snappy text. A great plot with a real sense of purpose which involves getting useful objects from one time zone which may well be



À veritable snowstorm of bombs in Thunderhawk.

### **Thunderhawk**

Producer: Lyversoft Memory required: 48K Retail price: 25.95 Language: machine code

Thunderhawk is a 'Phoenix'type game with three screens, In the lirst your ship, moving left and right at the base of the screen, combats seried ranks of hawk-like birds which drop bombs, and occasionally one will swoop down on you. In the second screen your rate of fire is slightly improved to cope with the increased numbers of hawks, bombs and their more frequent swooping attacks. Moving to the third screen, you are confronted with the large-sized mothership, the under-side of which must be eroded by your gunfire until a hole can be opened up in the green conveyor belt and it all blows up. While this is happening showers of large bombs drop not only from the mothership but from empty space as well, if you move outside the ship's

Completing all three screens takes you on to level 2, a repeat with slightly higher

odds.

### CRITICISM

"It seems odd for a software house to be bringing out a 'Phoenix'-style game nowadays, but anything is welcome if it's good. Unfortunately Thunderhawk doesn't seem to offer anything new. The standard of graphics is fairly good, better than a lot of earlier versions, as one would expect, but the scope of the game isn't very large. There are no speed differences to select, and once the three screens have been completed, which is very easy for the first level of play, it loses much of its little attraction. Another annoying thing is that nowhere does it state what control keys to use."

I think this is meant to be a "Phoenix" lookalike. It does have a few features of the arcade original. Due to its lack of colour and sound it destroys the game's playability. The hawks dive and swoop very nicely, but shooting anything on the screen can be be diflicult because the fire rate is exceptionally slow. The Mothership is quite nicely detailed and large, but its extraordinary bombing tech-niques - the bombs follow you about wherever you go, even beyond the ship's limits - are not at all like the arcade version, and are not an improvement. Graphics are nice and smooth, but not overfast. No useful information whatever has been put on the inlay or on the screen, so it's left to the player to figure out how to go

about it."

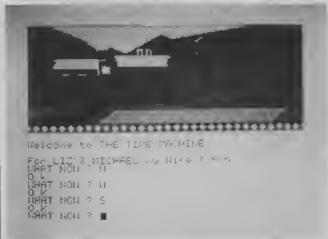
'The Spectrum may not be noted for its colour qualities, but I would have thought Lyversoft could have been a bit more imaginative in their use of colour in this game. Apart from the Mothership, with its magenta underbelly and orange top, the predominant colours are pale blue, blue and white. I would expect more from an arcade shoot 'em up today than this game ofers, and there are better, older ver-

sions available.

### COMMENTS

Control keys: 4/5 left/right, Ø to fire
Joystick: none
Keyboard play: after
discovering the keys, simple
and responsive but the
graphics are quite slow





to explore the situation for the local gazette. The quest starts with you stumbling around in the fog. If you manage to come across the house in question, you are led into an intricate search through a handful of time layers to find the missing—but that would give the game away.

### CRITICISM

'All in all a very entertaining adventure for both novice and experienced adventurer alike, because if you're new to this sort of game Digital Fantasia helpfully offer you the option of sending for advice sheets which provide just enough clues to the various stages of the plot to see any thinking greenhorn on his or her way. So there's much less chance of

needed in another. This makes for different stages of success until the final denouement and it all adds up to a high addictivity rating, H.G. Wells would have loved it, despite the slightly high price.'

### COMMENTS

Response: fast Graphics: optional, but well drawn and reasonably detailed General rating: very good atthough high in price

Use of computer 68%
Graphics 68%
Playability 90%
Getting started 60%
Addictive qualities 90%
Value for money 60%
Overall 75%

Use of colour: poor Graphics: above average, smooth Sound: poor Skill levels: progressive sheets Lives: 5 General rating: average

Use of computer 53% 58% Flayability 44% Getting started 30% Addictive qualities Value for money 0verall 43%

### Eskimo Eddie

Producer: Ocean Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.90 Language: machine code Authors: Christian Urquhart and Nick Pierpoint

First thing you see with most games is the loading screen — it's hard to take your eyes off this one—a credit to Ocean and its authors.

Eskimo Eddie is a two-screen 'Pengo.' On the first you must rescue Percy Penguin three times. He's at the top of the screen and you're at the bottom. In between, two polar bears and three jagged holes in the ice move from side to side. The polar bears wrap around, one going to the right and the other, at a slower pace, going to the left. The ice holes just bounce from side to side, quite fast. So stage one is a bit like an icy 'Frogger.' The object is to cross the screen upwards, collect Percy, and then bring him safely back down.

Completing this screen three times moves you on to



Super smooth and fast acting Rennie tableta cure an Indigestible bug in Eskimo Eddie.

the more traditional looking 'Pengo' game. The screen is filled with what looks like a board of Rennie tablets, then to a loud twanging noise a maze is created by removing some of them to reveal Percy Penguin in the middle. Four snow bugs then pop up and the game begins. As usual in a 'Pengo' game, Percy can push the white snow blocks around the screen in the hope of squashing the bugs, or melt them to let him past. The edges of the screen may be electrified and any snow bug touching the same edge becomes dazed and can be run over. With this version, the killed off snow bugs come back after a few seconds until they have been killed twice.

Following screens have the same four bugs, but they are more intelligent in homing in on Percy.

### CRITICISM

'The keys are very well laid out and offer a good response in moving the smooth graphics. The polar bears on screen one are especially well animated. Sound too is excellent with a strong, loud tune, although there isn't much to the actual game sound. This is a 'Pengo' game with much more content—perhaps not the best, but certainly very good value.'

'You effectively get two games for the price of one in Eskimo Eddie, a 'Frogger' and a 'Pengo.' This has obvious advantages in value but can prove to be a bit irritating when you have to wade through the first screen each time to play the second, main screen. Very good graphics with neat detailed touches. The actual game is quite a tough one with medium intelligent snow bugs, but very durable ones. Fortunately electrifying the fence has the effect of making all the bugs go slow, which device can get you out of a hole now and again. On the other hand, when you shove an ice block across the screen your move-ment is frozen, but not that of The bugs, who can then take the advantage and catch you. all in all, a very good game.

'Great graphics and sound

make this into an extremely playable game with lots of details, such as the way the ice blocks explode when 'melted.' Well-positioned keys, and responsive ones, help with the tough snow bugs, all in all a well thought out version of 'Pengo' where a lot of attention has been paid to detail, making it very good value.'

### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, N/M left/right, SYM SHIFT push Joystick: Kempston, Protek, AGF, ZX 2 Use of colour: very icy Graphics: smooth, fast, detailed, good Sound: great tunes, less in the game itself Skill levels: 1, but progressive difficulty Lives: 3 Screens: 2 General rating: very good.

Use of computer 84%
Graphics 80%
Playability 80%
Getting started 78%
Addictive qualities 75%
Value for money 75%
Overall 84%



### Two Gun Turtle

Producer: M. C. Lothlorien Memory required: 48K Retail price: 25.95 Language: machine code Author: Steve Hughes

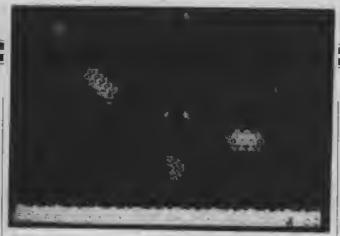
In the middle of winter a turtle is defending his strawberry patch against a variety of marauding bugs. Some go for strawberries, some go for the turtle. The turtle, for his protection, is armed with a gun – one, not two as the title might suggest, but that doesn't make any difference to this very fast game.

Bugs stealing strawberries, pick them up and sidle off screen, but if they are shot, then the strawberry drifts back to its place.

The game is played out against a calendar starting in October. As each month passes, the type bug changes. It's already snowing slightly, but as winer nears, larger snowf-

Wrap up warm for the icy 'Frogger' sequence in Eskimo Eddie.





Flying turtle totes two guns against flying nesties after his strawberries.

lakes fall and these may be picked up for benus points.

The strawberries, 12 in all, float in a neat three by four block at the centre of a black screen. In the background, pixel drops of snow fall. The monsters float in from both sides and the turtle may move all over the screen shooting in the direction of movement, but only hortizontally, although he can move in eight directions.

### CRITICISM

The graphics are nicely detailed, well drawn and move smoothly. They are also fast, and have to be as this is (almost) unplayably fast. I like the falling snow in the background and the explosions are very good. The bugs are super-intelligent, homing in on you in a gang if they can. The difficulty of firing in the direction of movement in a fast game is that you have to work ever so hard to keep far enough away from a bug to be able to turn and fire at it.

"If you've gct exceptionally fast reactions and the stamina of an elephant, you'll probably enjoy this game with its colcurful, smooth and detailed graphics. The bugs change every month, not during a break between screens, but actually as the game is playing. Each bug has its own characteristic, the skulls, for instance, are ruddy deadly and come straight for you. It manages to be fairly addictive, but also irritating, because you don't last very long."

'The graphics are nice and big and very fast. In fact the whole game is fast. I suppose



the idea of a flying turtle is novel, but the game is quite simple in itself. Hard to play though, you certainly have to make like greased lightning to shoot anything up and when there's two or three bugs it can be almost impossible to shoot them up in a row. Not bad, certainly worth a try to see if you like it.

### COMMENTS

Control keys: user-definable Joystick: almost any type via UDK Keyboard play: very responsive Use of colour: very good Graphics: very good, very fast Sound: good Skitl levels: progressively difficult Lives: 5

Use of computer	85%
Graphics	83%
Playability	60%
Getting started	69%
Addictive qualities	68%
Value for money	73%
Overall	73%

General rating: a good game, very tough, which may spoil its

### Sam Spade

Producer: Silversoft Memory required: 16K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code Author: D. B. Chapman

He meets them on the ladders –
On platforms left and right;
His only hope's to dig a trap,
They're much too mean to fight . . . .

Thus starts Silversoft's 'Panic' game of platforms, lad-

# Reviews

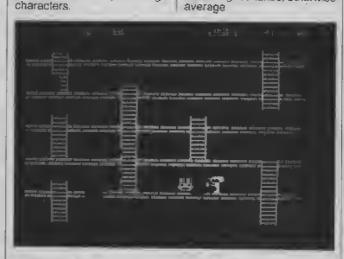
ders and monsters with a penchant for falling into holes. There are the traditional five levels connected with various ladders and three monsters on the first screen. Depending on their colour, monsters need to fall through either one hole, two or three. Monsters which get out of a trap before Sam hits them on the head with his spade will become more durable by changing colour.

There are, of course, many variations on 'Panic' now, each with their own idosyncracies, some better than others. This version boasts quite large characters.

'Sam Spade is a typical "Panic" game with nice big graphics and this is a good version of a game which is rather old now. I would say it's actually better than some and worse than others.'

### COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/X left/right, K/M up/down, L=dig/fill/kill doystick: Kempston Keyboard play: sensible keys make life easy, responsive Use of colour: fair to average Graphics: average, although large Sound: good tunes, otherwise



### CRITICISM

There isn't much can be said about a 'Panic' game now that hasn't already been said. On the whole this one has large and smooth moving graphics. They are all four blocks large, but as they overwrite each other this results in the ladders vanishing to black where they pass, which lends a flickery aspect that looks quite amateurish. Another oddity is that there is only a single function key for dig and fill holes. It takes three presses to dig a hole or kill a monster, so as soon as the hole is dug it starts to fill again! This can be very frustrating in the heat of play. On the other hand, it does mean less keys to have to worry about. On the whole it thought this was a pretty weak version, especially for Silver-

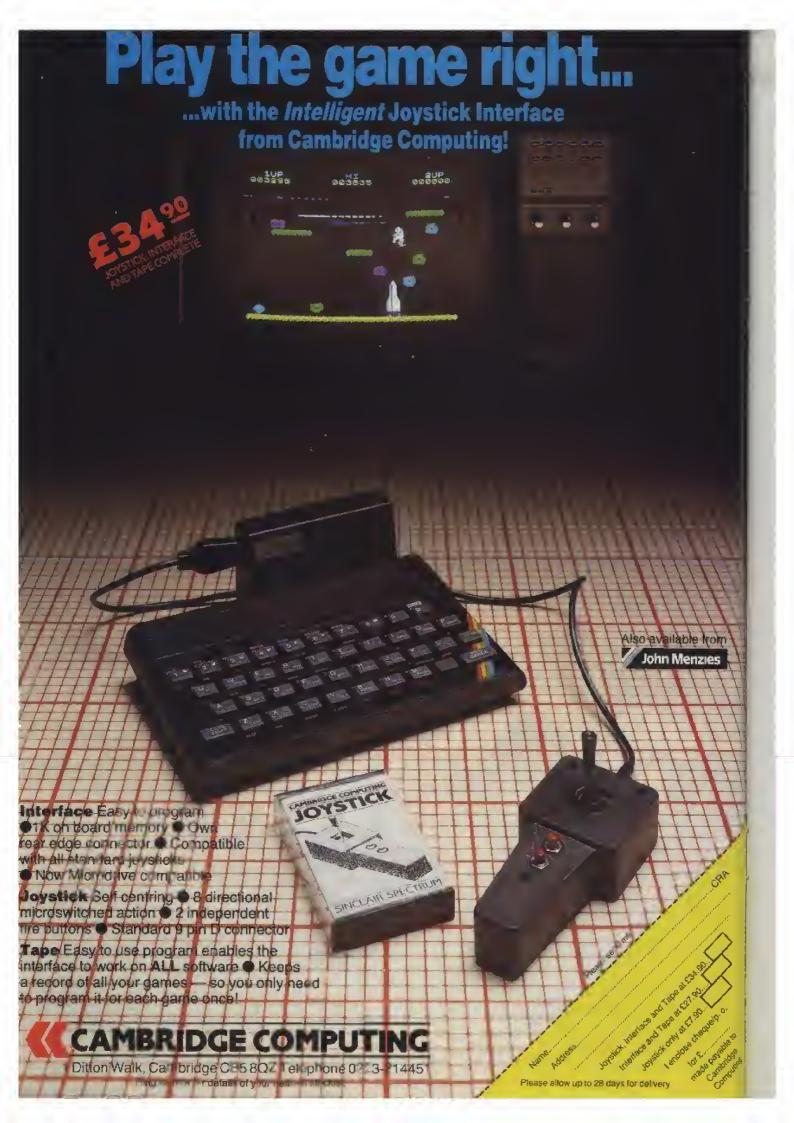
soft. The colour used is fair and the graphics, although large, are only average. It's a reasonable arcade copy in most respects, there's the falling oxygen level to worry about, and as you get through a few screens, there are a lot of monsters to worry about as well.

Skill levels: progressive difficulty Lives: 3 General rating: an old-style game, generally average.

Use of computer 62% 57% Flayability 56% Getting started 63% Addictive qualities 53% Value for money 57% 57%















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\*Kempston Sinckir Interface 2. Protek ör éműrinleni

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### **CHUCKMAN**

Producer: C.C.J. Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.00 Language: machine code

Author: K. Baker

Chuckman is based on the popular arcade game and bears a faint resemblance to Maziacs. Chuckman roars around a yellow maze on a skateboard, desperately trying to find and defuse eight timebombs before the time limit runs out. The maze is considerably larger than the playing area, although a general view of the maze immediately around Chuckman can be

selected. Time bombs can only be defused once a toolkit has been collected, and these are dotted at random about the maze, like the time-bombs. Equally there are holes in the ground which cannot be passed over safely, although these may be filled in if you collect a wheelbarrow first. Food is also availble and must be taken frequently if your energy level isn't to fall to dangerously low levels. The other major hazards are giant boots which tromp around killing you off. If you collect a spade first, it may be used to dig a hole, across which the boots cannot pass.

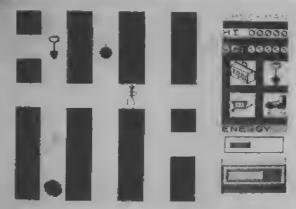
When all eight time-bombs have been defused, another eight will appear. Between different games the maze is ran-

domly generated.

### CRITICISM

The skate boarder, when stationary, waits impatiently, tapping his foot and leaning on the skate board. His only protection against stomping boots is to dig a hole, although if he finds a pair of roller skates the boots seem afraid of them. I was very impressed with Chuckman; the graphis are good, your hero being particu-larly well implemented, and the game was fun to play. It also requires a good memory and I enjoyed it.

There's no doubt that immediately Chuckman recalls Maziacs to mind, not only the maze, but also the very good animation of your hero. The graphics are of a high standard, with a very good status board to the right of the playing area, which shows time-bombs to defuse,



Spades, wheelbarrows, toolkits and bombs – get your skates on save the world from stomping bools.

hi-score, score, whether you are carrying a spade, wheel-barrow, a pair of skates for kil-ling off boots, or a toolkit. It's one of those games that doesn't appear all that difficult at first, but ends up being really quite addictive.

This is supposed to be based on the arcade game with a few differences, but I think they've forgotten the arcade game and developed an entirely new one. The map facility is very good, showing you about six times what you see when actually playing. The task is quite formidable, monitoring energy levels and avoiding pitfalls and boots. The scrolling action of the maze works very smoothly, and Chuckman is animated very well. There is no sound while playing, only when killed, something which may appeal to parents. A game that can be recommended.

### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, C/B left/right, SPACE = view maze, CAPS SHIFT = dig pit Joystick: Kempston (one reviewer noted that 'dig' didn't

Keyboard play: very responsive Use of colour: good Graphics: good, smooth, detailed and big Sound: very little Skill fevels: 3 Lives: General rating: very good and pretty addictive.

Use of computer 72% Graphics 80% Playability 84% Getting started 71% Addictive qualities 82% Value for money 82% Overall 79%

traffic islands and even turn

into cul-de-sacs and car parks.

The object, quite simply, is to get all the way through to the

finishing' line without steering

off the road. There are two

Learner. If you select Profes-sional you lose one of your

lives every time you veer off the road, whereas Learners

Professional

don't, but have a time limit imposed on them, there, is also an Automatic mode, which is really a demo.

The screen display is divided into three areas. The two larger squares at the top are the town map and a large graphic device of your car flashing. Running along the bottom is a large report strip. When you have finished, or run out of time or lives, this reports back on how well or badly you

### CRITICISM

Knight Driver is a drive around a rather scenic track and the graphics are quite good. As the playing area is much greater than the display, the graphics are constantly on the scroll, and they do this rather well. Unfortunately the control is not exactly brilliant (possibly an Eastern bloc vehicle - Skoda, etc). The game is playable at first but I soon began to lose interest - just beating the clock gels a little boring after a while. Nice graphics, above average.

The scene is set in an empty town and you're the lonesome driver. The graphics are drawn very nicely and the streets move across the screen wonderfully. But steering your car is a disappointment and it's quite unrealistic due to the fact that 45° increments are used. Thus you tend oversteer. Poor response makes this factor worse. Otherwise colour and sound are well used. At the end of each game the computer prints out your score and a lengthy report in very large letters. This delays you having another go immediately - frustrating.

'It's a pity, because the graphics are of a high quality,

### **Knight Driver**

Producer: Hewson Consultants Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: Machine code and some BASIC Author: Clive Brooker

Knight Driver is not an attempt at 'Pole Position' and is content to more resemble some of the earlier Spectrum road games, which is not to say that it is primitive at all. In essence, you must steer a car along a fairly lengthy series of roads which appear to be set in a seaside resort town. The view is seen from directly above and the roads are defined with double broken white lines as though the painter from Double Trouhas visited the place

shops, past parked cars, round

KILL 000000 \* \* FUEL + \* FUEL \* \* FUEL \* \*

and

that this game really offers so little to the player. After a couple of turns around the streets I had had enough. The car is exceptionally difficult to steer, more like a tank than a saloon! This doesn't add to its playabifity and certainly bonks on the head any addictive qualities it might have possessed. The report, which comes in such large letters that only two or three words can be displayed at once, takes an age and only acts to interrupt any flow you may have achieved. I would have expected a bit more from Hewsons than this."

# COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/CAPS SHIFT=left/right, BREAK/SYM SHIFT=accelerate/brake. **ENTER** to start Joystick: none Keyboard play: sensible keys, but the response is a bit slow and car control is difficult Use of colour: very good Graphics: nice and big, detailed and smooth with excellent scrolling Sound: good Skill levels: 2 Lives: 5 General rating: good graphics but ultimately a rather pointless game.

Use of computer	53%
Graphics	73%
Playability	60%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	45%
Value for money	57%
Overall	59%



# CITY

Producer: Terminal Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £6.95 Language: BASIC

This is a board game for between one and four players, with the computer always taking part. Each player is given a coloured diamond marker to move around the board, a

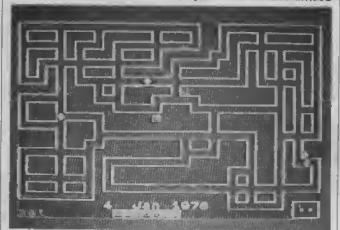
company name is entered, and a the computer takes the green marker. The screen is formed by a complex grid of streets, intersections and T-junctions. When it is a player's turn to move the computer allots a random number of spaces which may be taken, the cursor keys controlling direction. When the move is complete there is an option to build a variety of institutions such as banks, factories, pubs, apartments houses, and Each construction shops. costs a set amount and there are a limied number of each type of construction available in a game. If a player builds something, a symbol appears in the location chosen in the company colour.

Between each move a black

responses are also very slow because of the BASIC. The graphics are small and not really detailed, and I found the game generally uninteresting.

This is a sort of computerised Monopoly game. It has four playing lengths, but even the short game is extremely long. After an hour of playing with a fireind we were just beginning to make money, but that million was a long way off. It requires some practice, is above average but not very addictive, and left me indifferent as to a verdict. In some respects it is better than Monopoly, but I quite like Monopoly whereas I wasn't very bothered with this game."

'Based on Monopoly, The City doesn't play like Monopoly, the board isn't divided



Get in smartish with the City or the computer will monopolise the board.

square crosses the screen, descending one fine each time. He is the rent collector, who takes the rent for each property and puts it into the bank for the player. Money in the bank earns interest, but there are also taxes to pay.

Each player starts the game

Each player starts the game with £200,000 and the winner is the first to reach a million. As soon as the game starts, players must enter their names or the computer will take the turn and start building. When a player's turn is indicated, it must be taken immediately, or the lurn passes to the next player. Bumping into another player's marker will send your to jail for a period depending on the number of previous offences. Four types of game of different lengths are available.

# CRITICISM

'The game takes ages to play and is very slow. Key

into rigid or traditional properties. The graphics are not very interesting, and left to its own devices for a moment, the computer just carries on playing and winning. Not very exciting."

# COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors, plus prempt inputs
Keyboard play: slow
Use of colour: reasonable .
Graphics: small and uninteresting
Sound: poor
Skill levels: 1
General rating: fair, not at all addictive.

Use of computer	48%
Graphics	49%
Playability	35%
Getting started	49%
Addictive qualities	36%
Value for money	48%
Overall	44%

# Handicap Golf

Producer: C.R.L. Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: BASIC

"Play a round of 18 holes on the "Spectrum" course of 5,444 yards. Your set of clubs consists of four Woods, eight Irons, a Pitch Wedge, a Sand Wedge and a putter. PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE.

So goes the unpretentious start to C.R.L.'s charming golf simulation. Pressing any key then lists the 18 holes, the par and length for each, with a par for the course of 70. This is followed by a listing of the clubs with a graphic depiction of each and the distance in yards for each. Wind factor must be taken into account in the choice of club and direction, and the factor is also shown on the greens for outling. A final page asks whether one or two players are taking part. It is then possible to preview all 18 holes befoe starting if you so wish. This is not essential because you may view any hole before it is played as well. This element is quite important because, unlike almost every other golf program, this one splits the holes into several views, thus simulating the real game, where you would not be able to see the end of the hole in any

The display is In a 3D-style perspective with 'you' and your



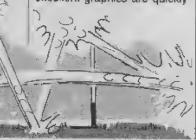


Valhalla on the golf course as caddy watches player take a shot. I can also see. . . a divot.

caddy seen standing ready on the first tee. The figures and animation of them is very reminiscent of the Valhalla graphics. Pressing P will allow a preview of the hole to be played; pressing C allows selection of club, bearing in mind the statistics printed below the display area: Club selection is made by pressing any key which moves a cursor arrow along under the clubs until it reaches the one desired. It may then be ENTERed. The angle of the shot is selected by using keys 6 and 7 to move a cursor marker on the side of the screen up or down, ENTERing when it is correct. In full animation, 'you' then swing and the ball curves away. As soon as it comes to a rest, the golfer staring after it, the caddy lifts the bag on to his shoulder, and both set off after the ball. Two seconds of animation, and the scene cuts to the next view, ready for the follow-up shots

# CRITICISM

'Golf - another boring game to review, I thought. NO! I was wrong. This one is very enjoyable. I was flabbergasted to be able to see the whole course, and very impressive it is too, with detailed different types of trees, hedges, bushes, rough, bunkers, rivers, ponds, bridges, even the clubhouse, and not forgetting the player and his caddy. Both are very well animated, even to the swing and the tense wait for the ball to land. Good close-ups are given when you are on the green. This is the best golfing game I have seen. Everything is so realistic, and the excellent graphics are quickly



displayed. There are even amusing remarks from the computer to cheer you up! A game that I really enjoyed playing, and that I can recommend to anyone who wants a golfing

This is the best golf game I have ever seen, with plenty of details, scenic fairways, and it is very playable. Unbelievably the game is in BASIC, but because it's so good, who cares? A very good feature is that for even a player with no knowledge of golf or what clubs do, the game is simple because everything is explained on screen. Excellent colour and fantastic graphics.'

'At the end of a tiring round, it's really nice to see "yourself" part company with the caddy and walk wearily into the club house for a welcoming beer – or something. The only detail that C.R.L. seem to have left out is the tipping of the caddy (or perhaps that isn't done in the best of clubs!). This game is so well thought out and displayed that it looks like a television golf championship right down to the editing of the scenes. Wonderful, and satisfying to play.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: 6 and 7 F and S, very simple and logical, and all prompted on screen Joystick: no point Keyboard play: very easy Use of colour: excellent Graphics: very good Sound: very little, just the peace and quite of a well-kept

Skill levels: 1
General rating: an excellent simulation, one of the best golf games around, highly recommended

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	80%
Playability	84%
Getting started	73%
Addictive qualities	84%
Value for money	87%
Overall	81%

Reviews

# **GRID-BUG**

Producer; C.C.I. Memory required: 16K Retail price: \$5.50 Language; machine code Program; Elfin Software

In Grid-Bug you must guide a hero bug across square or along the grid surrounding them, eating the strawberries in the squares. If you cross an empty square, you leave a addictive. The graphics are small and the use of colour isn't very exciting either.'

# COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, C/B left/right
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of cofour: basic
Graphics: block, small and undetailed
Sound: average
Skill levels: progressive difficulty

000890 HIGH GRIDBUG SCORE 000610

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Strawberry Fields forever, but keep the spiders at bay.

strawberry behind, which must be eaten. On the grid there are spiders which eat bugs, and at least one which runs across the squares. When a screen has been cleared of strawberries (170 of them) the next screen contains more spiders.

The trick is to clear the squares, using the grids to move between empty squares so that you don't leave more strawbernes behind. That's it.

CRITICISM

'The game is fun to play and is addictive. The graphics are fairly simple, but sheer playability makes up for this.'

This is a grid game with a novel difference. The object is to collect strawberries placed in the grid squares, whilst avoiding the spiders, and that's all there is to it. An original game, perhaps for the younger players, although all the same, it's not worth buying

The main problem with Grid-Bug is that it doesn't really contain enough to be interesting after a few minutes play. It does manage to be quite difficult, especially on the later screens when there are a lot of spiders out to get you, but it doesn't add up to being very playable and therefore not very

Lives: 5
General rating: mixed opinions from poor to good.

Use of computer 60% Graphics 55% Playability 58% Getting started 62% Addictive qualities: 57% Value for money 58% Overall 58%

# Star Warrior

Producer: Visions
Memory required: 16K
Retail price: £6.95
Language: machine code
Author: John Edwards

It would be true to say that the prime objective in this game is to stay alive—not an easy task. Three interdependent screens make up the action.

In the first, you are in your space craft at the bottom of the screen and you must shoot all the alien craft which travel down the vertically wrapped around screen dropping

showers and showers of pixel sized bombs at you. Vertical movement to about half the screen height is allowed and your craft may wrap around horizontally.

In the second screen you

In the second screen you start at the top and must land the space craft at the bottom, navigating through a dense shower of asteroids which move in various directions.

On landing you proceed immediately to the third screen. Your ship is landed at the top left and there is an entrance to the underground maze in the centre. The main problem is the cyborg which follows your every move, firing continuously. At the bottom of the caverns a crystal is located which will refuel you ship so it can take off again, but getting down there and collecting it, and getting back safely is an extremely tough task.

With all three screens completed the game repeats with different aliens and a much more intelligent cyborg.

# **CRITICISM**

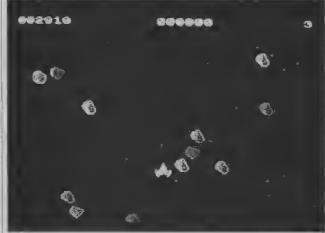
Each alien protects the other on the first screen of this game, It has great graphics with scrolling star background, good to get past. A good concept, a pity about the graphics and keyboard layout.

keyboard layout.

'Star Warrior is an unusual looking game, apparently simple graphics turn out to be quite complex, with shifting colours and fast movement. The aliens explode satisfyingly; you explode wonderfully. Getting past the cyborg is very difficult and requires careful timing and the use of the wrap around screen to draw the beast away from the entrance for a second. Fortunately the fact that you can get in seems to drive it into a mindless frenzy for a moment — your only saving grace. A quite original game, tough and addictive in playing.'

# COMMENTS

Control keys: 6/7 left/right, O=fire, M/K=up/down, K=thrust as well Joystick: Kempston Keyboard play: highly responsive Use of colour: good Graphics: fast, smooth and very detailed, generally good Sound: reasonable although very low key Skill levels: 1



Multi-coloured esteroids throng the skies as Star Warrior descends to meet the cyborg.

explosions with sound and is very addictive. The one draw-back might be the tiny bomb showers which can only be seen close up to the screen. Otherwise the best game from Visions. Recommended!'

The wrap around screen can be quite useful for avoiding stray bombs on the first stage. In the second, the longer you stay on it, the less points you get. The third board is the worst because the graphics of the maze are poor and the cyborg is impossible

Lives: 3 Screens: 3 and 5 different alien levels General rating: above average to good.

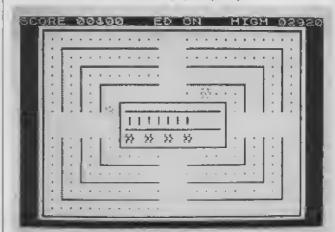
Use of computer	61%
Graphics	75%
Playability	73%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	74%
Value for money	58%
Overall	68%

# **ED-ON**

Producer: C.C.I. Memory required: 16K Retail price: £5.00 Language: machine code

Based on an old arcade game, Ed-On presents you with a series of concentric squares, representing four 'streets' with four compass point crossovers. The streets are lined with dots, and you must drive your car around in one direction, collecting all the dots. The computer controls another vehicle, seem very intelligent. The biggest disadvantage of this game is that the keys are dual-purpose, that is, they can be used to increase or decrease your speed as well as move the car up/down or left/right. This does tend to get confusing. Not a very interesting game on the whole but it much the people to see the seems.

might appeal to some."
"Ed-On is very similar to Arcade's first game, Gridrun, with the addition of acceleration and braking. The graphics are small and the use of colour is pretty drab. A simple idea and quite hard to play but it doesn't get very far and palls quite quickly."



Fast Ed-on collisions seem inevitable when you're faced with maniac drivers.

which travels in the opposite direction and which you must avoid. At points in the game flags appear and add bonus points if collected. On clearing a screen you then face the task over again with two enemy cars, and so on.

The four directional keys allow you to speed up or slow down, as well as change lanes to avoid the enemy cars. In the centre box your lives appear as well as a simple bar indicator for speed. The enemy cars have a fixed speed of travel, and change lanes whenever they feel like it.

# CRITICISM

'The enemy cars tend to home in on your lane, which makes the game very fast and fairly challenging, especially when there are two or more cars in play. The graphics are simple and it ends up being just another average game.'

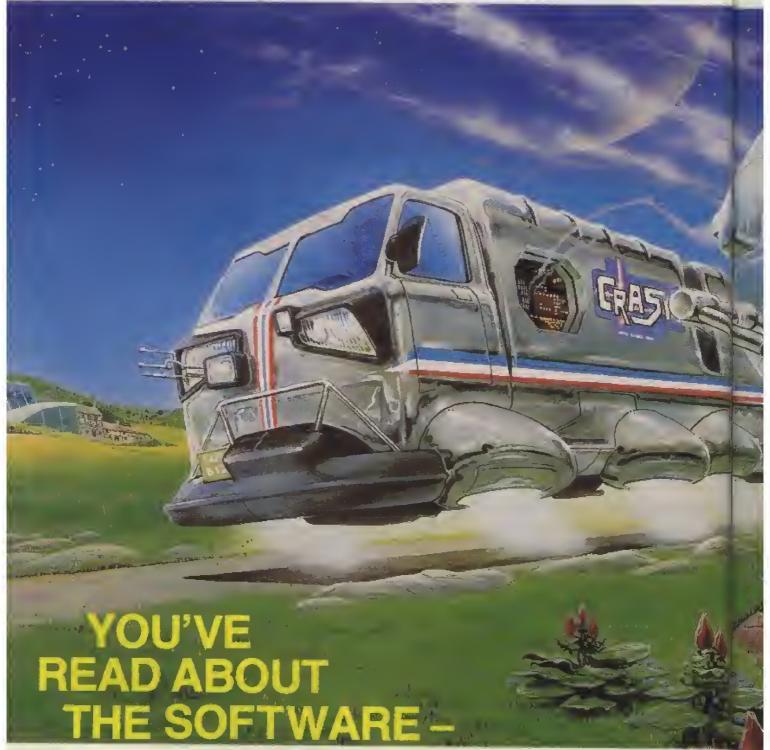
'Once loaded, there are a good set of instructions. The idea is simple but it is a quite difficult game to play as the computer-controlled cars

# COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, C/B left/right
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: very
responsive although the
dual-purpose takes some
getting used to
Use of colour: poor
Graphics: block movement,
simple and not very big
Sound: average
Skill levels: progressive
Lives: 5
General rating: fair to
average, not very addictive.

Use of computer 52% 45% Playability 52% Getting started 58% Addictive qualities Value for money 50% Overall 51%





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CRASH - SPECTRUM SOFTWARE



# JERRASH.

# Dreamers on the Increase

CRL, who call themselves 'The Dream Makers,' have just put two new in-house programmers to work. Paul Mee, who previously worked for an educational software bouse inhead the software house, joined the company to become the Software Development Manager in charge of the whole programming department. He began his career in computers with Hewlett Packard and has a good working knowledge of both high- and low-level tanguages. His function at CRL will be the co-ordination and development of new software software house, joined the and development of new software

products.

'CRL is a forward-looking company which, in the space of 12 months, has become one of the leading companies in its field, said Paul. Let's hope that Paul can look forward enough to firmly discourage the likes of Caveman and Lunar Rescue and encourage games tike Omega Run. In that way the public, too, may believe that CRL is indeed a leader in its field.

field The other new employee is Peter Jobate, a self-taught machine code programmer who has had programs published in books and magazines. Peter's first new program for CRL will be released shortly. The new additions bring CRL's total number of full-time programmers



Software co-ordinator Paul Mee



Peter Jobate - new programmer

# Jet Set Willy in **Multiple Deaths**

We have had a number of enquiries from people asking why their det Set Willy programs have behaved oddly. In fact there is no real problem and the program has not crashed when you suddenly lose all those valuable lives at one go. Unlike Manic Miner, Jet Set

Sales Manager, has had a busy time recently what with the rush over Jet Set Willy. Now he has had to look into Thrusta and Push Off, both advertised as 16K games. It would appear that they were 16K except that somewhere an odd byte has crept in and made It impossible to load either game into a 16K Spectrum. The CRASH technical department lowered RAMTOP on one of our 48K Spectrums to simulate a 16K Spectrum and tried loading, without luck, Colin Stokes was very prompt in ringing back to say that it appeared to be the case, and that Software Projects would be changing the cassette inlays as soon as possible. Of course this



Willy is more of an arcade adventure with random elements built in, objects and hazards may more around. The worst obstacle is a visit to the Attic. Your very presence there will cause a chain reaction in the Chapel. The four guardians from there will go to the Kitchen, West of Kitchen, Cuckoo's Nest and the East Wall Base, making short cuts through them impossible as you will encounter intant death when entering the rooms:

Software Projects, however, have offered an apology over the fact that the program requires reloading at the end of the game after visiting the Attic. This is due to the complexity of the game and the sheer size of the program needed to generate the 60 screens

Software Project's Colin Stokes, who recently joined the company, having left Imagine, where he was

picture of Rod from the last issue.

it locks as though he's also aiming

to pick up the award next year for 'Best Dressed Person of the

has only been a problem for 16K Spectrum owners



Colin Stokes

# Person of the Year

Awards within the computer industry are now really getting under way, and the only big question left to be answered is: When will we be seeing the Golden Joystick Awards presentation ceremony televised from some grand showcase centre in London? Will we see Esther Rantzen trying to elicit some gems from Matthew Smith for picking up the Best Jumper award, Seb Goe shaking paws with the Piman for winning at Olympimania or Terry Wogan congratulating Chris Urquhart for having backed the best hunch in history?

But while plans for next year's great event go ahead, the CTA (Computer Trade Association) has voted Rod Cousens of Quicksilva 'Person of the Year.' Rod received the award primarily

because of his work in promoting the UK software industry. In his capacity as vice-chairman of GOSH (Guild of Software Houses), Rod has been active throughout 1983 in his efforts to fight tape piracy and protect consumers' interests. On a more serious note, judging by our





Rod Cousens

# More Forest

d you have been wandering (or even offecteering) around Phipps Associates's Forest, you may have wandered off the edge of mapped territory or even wondered about the beyond. Now a detailed map is available for the much more complex forest which flish more complex forest which lies somewhere in the program. The new territory is as different from the first as chalk is from cheese. Giant flords and lakes have appeared and steep-sided valleys, and even a small wooded island in the middle of the largest This acenery is more like that found in Scandinavia, the home of the sport of orienteering. Like *The* Forest map, the Complex Forest map is a 1/10000 scale with 5m contours and has a 12-point orienteering course ready

Marked.
An amazing fact about the program The Forest is that 5,600 square kilometeres of territory have been fitted into the 48K memory. The existing Forest map, which comes with the program, covers only two square kilometers. Similarly, the newly published map of the complex orest covers another two square kilonetes. So there's still plenty self for the intrepid explorer to do and, who knows, maybe there's some forgotten tribe lost somewhere in those blank knometres!

Nometres!
The new map is available only by mail order from Phipps
Associates, 172 Kingston Road, Ewell, Surrey: 01-393 0283, and costs 85 pence. The Forest program and basic map costs 29.95 from computer shops anywhere and CRASH Mail Order.



Different as chalk from cheese - the new Complex Forest map.

# Game Keeper for the Autumn

The Game Keeper, Birmingham's largest computer software stockist, has decided to pull out of the hardware market and restrict itself to software and accessories. The reason given for this decision is the totally inadedquate supply is the totally inadequate supply of computers from manufacturers in Britain, making it financially not worth while to sell major lines. In a sharp rebuke, **Tony Noble**, Game Keeper's managing director, says, 'It is ironic that in a time when Clive Sinctair is announcing to the Press that computer dealers are unable to deal with volume sales that The Game Keeper has had to stop selling computers because companies like Sinclair have supplied zero stock this year. The Game Keeper needs to obtain units in excess of 500 computers a week from manufacturers and the manufacturers are totally

unable to supply in such volume.
The Game Keeper has three shops in Birmingham and one in Coventry. Now they are planning to open a network of software specialist outlets stocking games for Spectrum. Commodore and BBC computers. At the same time some 15 freelance writers are preparing new software titles for various macines to be released in the autumn under The Game Keeper software title.

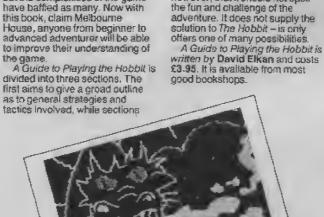
# Stonked Out

Further along the Mersey imagine seem to have still been having trouble with their game Stonkers, which crashes after a few minutes' play. This was said to be a fault on some of the first batch back from duplication, but later batches still suffered with the problem, Imagine have told us that the hitch has been put right, but, once again, our last batch of tapes still seemed reluctant to Stonk for more than a few minutes. Imagine will, of course, replace any faulty tapes, so if you are having problems we suggest you send them back. Obviously lots of games are working fine, however, as Stonkers now stands at 28 in the CRASH HOTLINE.

# Playing the Game

For all adventurers who prefer to remain in Totkien's Middle Earth rather than come up to the late nineteenth century of Sherlock Homes or the early twentieth of Mugsy, Melbourne House have published a new book called A Guide to Playing the Hobbit.

The Hobbit, winner of the Golden Joystick Award for Strategy Game of the Year 1983, is still regarded by thousands as one of the best ever adventures, but the complexities of the game have baffed as many. Now with this book, claim Melbourne House, anyone from beginner to advanced adventurer will be able to improve their understanding of



two and three give an increasing

amount of guidance offering moe detailed solutions to problems the player may encounter. The book has been written in such a way, however, that it should not spoil

# (INCEPTIME) COMPUTER GAMES

# **Splat Mats**

Incentive Software Ltd have come up with the ideal peripheral for your Spectrum – something on which to stand that glass of beer, Coke or mug of tea. It's a 'Splat Mat.' For owners of the game Splat/ the device printed on the centre of the beer mat will be familiar. For those sadly uninitiated Splatterites, it probably just looks like the thing it's supposed to stop! Splat Mats are available from

Incentive Software at 54 London Street, Reading RG1 4SQ, and they're free on request with a stamped addressed envelope

# Spectrum for Cablevision

Cable Interactive Services (CIS), a division of British Telecome, has won the first contract to supply TV video games to a UK cable operator. The contract is with Rediffusion and is for the CIS Gamestar service. Up to one million homes on Reditfusion networks throughout the country will be able to access Gamestar, starting this summer.

Customers subscribe to Gamestar and receive a home terminal allowing them to load telesoftware down a cable and have any number of plays of a game. The cost is £9.95 a month and for this you receive hardware consisting of a 48K Spectrum with an add-on box providing joystick facilities. The black box, with its Gamestar logo, sits neatly underneath the Spectrum connects to the computer and interfaces with the cable system. It contains an amplified speaker, to



The Gamestar subscriber package includes Spectrum (48K), black box and joystick. By courtesy of British Telecom.

get around the Spectrum's abysmal lack of sound. A joystick will be included as standard. The black box contains enough memory to offer a 'welcome' switched on and download a

menu of games on offer. Gamestar will offer a mix of up to 20 games, ranging from arcade through to adventure and educational games, and it will be replacing five every month. Most games are envisaged as being supplied by established existing software houses, although there will be scope for new software, especially as the system grows. At any time, of couse, the Spectrum may be used in the normal way for

playing games or computing. In addition to the service, subscribers will also receive a

monthly newsletter magazine giving details of current and forthcoming programs as well as offering subscribers the opportunity to air their views on the games. Areas likely to be able to receive the Gamestar service are: Bargoed/Penybryn, Barrow, Basildon, Brighton/Hove, Bristol, Burnley, Darlington, Deal, Dover, Exeter, Folkestone, Grimsby, Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth, Portadawe, Reading, Rhondda, Rotherham, Southampton, South Tyneside, Stockton (including Bitlingham), Stoke-on-Trent, Swansea; additions: Hartlepool, Hull, Lancaster/Kendal, Maidstone, Mansfield, Newbridge, Newport, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Wirral MBC, Wolverhampton, Worcester

# **New Interface**

Ram Electronics, the games herdware specialists, have added the Ram Turbo multi-purpose interface to its range of Spectrum compatible products. The object of the new interface, which plugs straight into any Spectrum, is to provide the user with a wide variety of interfaces. While tape softwere remains an option. software remains an option, games players may now take advantage of ROM cartridge software and connect the Microdrive and other peripherals via the full expansion port at the rear of the unit. Kempsion and Protek protocols are supported by the Ram Turbo as well as the rapid tire Quickshot II.

A built-in safety device stops the user from causing expansive damage to the computer as the power cable to the Spectrum can only be connected after the interface is in place.

only se connected and the interface is in place.

Ram Electronic's technical director. Martin Shoebridge.

says, 'Technically it's miles ahead of any competitions, but it may be the 24-hour despatch that turns out to be its biggest selling point.'

The Ram Turbo costs £22,95 on mail order but SC1 for postage.

on mail order pius £1 for postage and packing £3 pp for overseas), and is available from Ram Electronics (Fleet) Ltd, 106 Fleet Boad, Fleet, Hants.



# Chris Joins Ocean

Seventeen-year-old Christian
Urquhart, who co-wrote Ocean's
Very Successful game
Transversion, has now joined
Ocean's team of in-house
Ocean's team of in-house
Chris was first byten by the
computer bug when he set eyes
on an IBM muni-computer in 1976.
Says Chris nostalgically, "It was
working there at the time, and he
arranged for me to see it in action." working there at the time, and he arranged for me to see it in action. Ever since then he has dreamt of becoming a programmer. But this first real introduction to the computer, games came through his friend Mick Pierpoint. They live opposite each other in Wallassey on Merseyside, but during term-time Chris was away at boarding school in Wales. During the school holidays Nick Spectrum to Chris, and, impressed by what he saw, Chris impressed by what he saw, Chris decided to teach himself programming.
Together they decided to write a

game as a programming exercise.
The 'exercise' was Transversion,
and they concluded it wasn't too
bad for a first attempt. bad for a first attempt.
Encouraged by friends, who said it was just as good as games and already on the market, Chris and Nick approached Ocean Software, "We did telephone some other software houses, but they suggested sending in the game," other software houses, but they suggested sending in the game, whereas John Woods of Ocean invited us to come in and see him on a Saturday,' Nick remembers.

John Woods and David Ward

of Ocean both liked the game, a few minor alterations were suggested and the game was accepted for publication. It was subsequently given a 'highly recommended' rating in the first Delighted with this success. Delighted with this success,
Delighted with this success,
Chris and Nick decided to embark
on a second adventure. Ocean
equipped Nick was some
handware, and he continued his

hardware, and he continued his nardware, and he continued his program writing at school in his spare time. At weekends they would visit Ocean to discuss progress, and to use some of the in-house programmare.

tion, metalogue in the second of the second

and concentrate full time on and concentrate full time on programming. He convinced his parents that he really wanted a programming career. Ocean offered him the chance on the understanding that his parents were agreeable.

With one ambiguous stress of the contract of the chance of

With one ambition already

# SEIDDAB EXPANSION \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Creators of the infernal Seiddab, Hewson Consultants, have just moved into new premises in Abingdon. It hs 2,000 square feet, space enough for offices, show room and warehousing. The move has enabled them to install and run a large duplication facility. But as importantly, it will now allow them to double their staft. Already they are recruiting two in-house programmers for games finishing and conversion. The company's growth has also been helped by the writing talents of Andrew Hewson whose book (written in conjunction with John Hardman) 40 Best Machine Code Routines for the ZX Spectrum, recently won the CTA award for the best book published in 1983.



Andrew Braybrook and Steve Turner - the Solidabs in person.



Andrew Hewson

# satisfied, Chris has now replaced write a number one best-seller and to work with an artist, some fantastic game effects. As for Nick, he is studying hard is only temporarily under wraps.

David Ward and John Woods of Ocean

# TO THE STARS!

Birmingham, generally lagging behind Manchester and Liverpool for games programming, is now making a sterling effort to catch up. Brand new company Gargoyle Games, has launched its first game for the 48K Spectrum. It's called Ad Astra (to the stars), and is a 3D shoot emplike you've never seen before. The 3D perspective view is quite astorishing – see the review in

Programs authors Greg Folis and Roy Carter have a

background not only in programming, but also in art, and the graphics quality of the new game certainly points to their artistic abilities. They are now working hard on the second release which has a tentative title of Arabesque, but says Greg, this will probably be changed before the game is available: It will be an arcade style adventure and features a warrior sixty-four pixels high. The game employs full film techniques to achieve the animation effects, techniques which can also be seen to good effect in Ad Astra.



# COMPUTER GAMES ON VIDEO

It was the psychedelic communications guru of the late Sixties/early Seventies, Marshall McLuhan, who proclaimed the book and written word dead in favour of television. He was probably aware that the central weakness of his argument was the fact that all his arguments were presented in books! Twenty years later books and magazines are still the primary source of knowledge, especially in specialist fields like computers. We have, of course, seen magazines presented as computer programs, sold in cassette form, but to date television as such has been remarkably uninterested in computer games. Central
Television's Magic Micro
Mission was the first programme
which actually examined the
phenomenon, but now Yorkshire
TV have appreciated. phenomenon, but now Yorkshire TV have announced that they are soon recording a series called The Game, which will be screened locally, and then, if it proves successful, will be networked later. The Game is not a programme about computer games but is in itself a computer game using a live TV audience, guest celebrities and a clever mix of video and computer game techniques.

At the time of writing, Yorkshire TV are seeking adventure, arcade and strategy game players of all ages within the Yorkshire area. Auditions are being held to see whether the entrants are up to scratch, and the really nimble lingered ones will eventually go into the studio to record the programmes.

Another departure is TV Choice's new video cassette, The World's Greatest Computer Games. Claimed to be the linst-ever British video devoted to computer games software, the video is 30 minutes long and puts together, 'a collection of the highest quality and most mind-boggling computer games, shows you how to play them and highlights their imaginative features.'

Twenty-one games are featured, with Chris Tarrant, of Tiswas, OTT and TVam fame, hosting the programme. The tape starts and ends with advertisements from some of the major companies in the business, and covers games for the Commodore 64, Oric Atmos, BBC, Atari computer and VCS, and the ZX Spectrum, which Mr Tarrant refers to rather quaintly as the 'Zed-ex.' Among the Spectrum games, well-known progams like Valhalla, Black Crystal and Jet Set Willy are featured.

Vainaira, Black Crystal and Jet Set Willy are featured.
Executive producer Norman Thomas says, "While there are some very good games around, the vast majority of the products at the moment on the market are absolute rubbish. This video will direct the consumer to the best games they can buy. It will allow them to sample the games before they part with their money."

# 2 Multiplayer Attentions Att

After the big hoo-haa of its introduction last autumn very little has been heard of the Microdrive and its ZX interface 1. Either the Spectrum owners who have ordered this unit are waiting in stoic silence for the 'high-speed' random access (or random delivery?) unit to drop through the letterbox or they already are in possession of the very same and are treating it with the same interest and enthusiasm befitting the old and dusty ZX81 hanging above the fireplace.



Either way, it does appear rather odd that neither Press nor software houses are not frantically buzzing with news of application programs benefiting from the excellent specifications of the machine. The 'Spot the first Microdrive cartridge-based games software advertisement' competition has yet, to my knowledge, to be won. Considering the usual gargantuan detay between ads and the availability of the product this really means that no Microdrive-based games software is to appear before summertime.

Having just received by miracle a rare species by the name of Microdrive on loan from the very source and creator of ZX wonders (to be returned within two weeks – could this really be the one and only working unit on its Ulyssean travels

to far and distant magazines?) CRASH has the opportunity to discover the untapped resources contained within the Microdrive and the ZX interface 1 and with luck avoid the temptation of launching the first Microdrive User supplement (what an original ideal).

plement (what an original idea!).

At first the main function of the ZX interface 1 becomes obvious: this unit provides the roué games player with a wonderfully titted keyboard position and allows a far superior keyboard control for those multi-digit arcade games.

But what of the side-effects? Well,

But what of the side-effects? Well, three cannily hidden benefits have been spotted and will be discussed in detail.

# Megastorage

Keen programmers appreciate LOAD and SAVE wait times as being the most creative pauses in the programming process, but many games players could do without this boring interlude. The Spectrum may have improved loading times by a factor of four over the ZX81, but this is annihilated by the vast memory size of the 48K Spectrum. The Microdrive sounds like the remedy to this problem. Just download your cassette-based games software into the Microdrive cartridge and you have instant access to your games library.

access to your games library.

But wait, this proves to be a night-mare. The games software consists of pure machine code in 95% of cases and once loaded it is practically impossible to return to Spectrum BASIC for the Microdrive save commands. The idea proves to be impossible unless you are a whizz kid and can interrupt and disassemble the game's machine code, locate the start position in memory and download the dissected code into Microdrive data files. You will then still have problems with autostart and possibly you may even have to relocate code which may have been originally in the Microdrive systems variable and MAPs area of the memory. Obviously the Microdrive is not the solution to this problem.





GVE

# Networking We take a look at the fabled, legendary Microdrive

There is however another advantage. The cartridge tape conains a minimum of 85K bytes and whizzes round in less than eight seconds. Given the fact that the operating system has to locate the file to be loaded, the average access time may vary from one to eight seconds depending on the position and length of the file on tape. Compared to an average load time of four minutes for a 25K games program on cassette, the Microdrive constitutes a 30-fold reduction of wait time and you can wave goobye to the usual tea-break at this point. The Microdrive is a random access storage system - forget about rewinding and locating program starts. The cartridge contains an endless toop of tape and the operating system, which is an extension of the Sinclair BASIC, will control the Microdrive and will guarantee a complete revolution of the cartridge tape for every access. During this revolution it will look for the file selected or for the clear tape area required for the load or save function and perform the LOAD or SAVE automatically. Once completed, it will have positioned the tape ready for the next access.

This really opens up new country for epicventures, imagine popular adventures such as *The Hobbit* or *Valhalla*, then extend the number of loations by a factor of say 10 or 20 and you will soon see that your chance of getting lost forever in adventureland increases alarm-

The principle with which this can be achieved is similar to the exciting paperback adventure The Warlock of Firetop Mountain from Penguln. Your choice of action will dictate which page number you will have to continue on and similarly the same applies with the Microdrive. Substitute the page number with data files and depending on your action in combination with various other conditions, such as objects carried, energy level, past history, etc, the program will load the appropriate data files, which can contain new locations, new characters or new conditions.

If the idea of such a mammoth adventure scares you, just think of the poor programmer, who is now faced with the agony of writing machine code programs in excess of 100Kbytes. No doubt adventure games writers are at this very moment labouring away frantically at their first microdrive epics and we will see some results in the near future. The key to a successful approach will not only lie in the quantity of locations, but in the intricacy of the path of actions and events which should hide the in-built linearity and limitation of access to the various dala bases. In other words, the epic should not result in a series of self-contained subadventures, but should appear as a smoothly flowing saga.

# **LOCAL NETWORKING**

A great many people consider the computer to be a deadly social enemy which can turn the entire population into bleary-eyed non-communicating morons living within the confined of their own computer system. A network system goes a long way towards bringing people back to contact with each other by allowing one anti-social computer user to communicate with another. It helps them to play friendly chess matches over long distance without coming to blows with each other or to play 'Battleships' without being able to peek at the opponent's secret ship positions. It also allows the sharing of expensive data bases and up-to-date news items.

The X Interface 1 in conjunction with the extended BASIC sets up a local area network, and by local this really means a user-group within the confines of a room. Now obviously this limits the range of applications. Chess and other board games may well be played in their original version without the computer at this close range; you would hardly think of communicating with another person in the same room via telephone when the person can be approached directly.

the person can be approached directly. This really only leaves multi-player simulation games as a useful application, where each screen simulates the cockpit or battle-station of the individual player, the computer providing the

realistic backdrop of the game. **Protek** here are showing an enterprising spirit with their two-player version of *Hunter Killer*. Obviously the network will prove useful for school classes where the teacher may set up a local network with the pupils. Apart from downloading Master programs he will be able to hold conversions through the din of the classicom.

# SERIAL TRANSMISSION

Another communications option is the serial interface RS232. This proves useful for connecting up peripherals such as printers, plotters and moderns. If your Sinclair printer has developed disfexia and prins out garbled and random pixel messages, doesn't feed the paper and saves paper cost by printing listings all on the same line, then you might consider upgrading your print-outs by purchasing an inexpensive dot matrix or letter quality daisywheel printer. The interface provides two channels. The text channel 't' is used to send the text or listing to the printer. The binary channel 'b' will transmit binary control codes to the printer for double width, double strike, condensed italic printing, etc. Any standard baud rate between 50 and 19,200 may be set up, so this should

accommodate any peripheral.

A V21 modern may be connected up to the serial interface and access gained to remote computer owners via normal telephone lines. The modern converts the serial data stream into a phone line compatible frequency shift signat. An audio coupler may be used so that the transmission can occur through the speaker and mouthpiece of a conventional phone. The Spectrum can also be hooked up to another computer with a serial interface. A good knowledge of both systems and necessary protocols is required.

# **EPIC LOGUE**

Certainly the most exciting aspect of the ZX interface 1 is the cheap and fast microdrive storage systems, which opens up a whole new world of adventure and possibly arcade games. It will be interesting to see what price level will be set for Microdrive cartridge software. Franco Frey





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tion to that as long as you give them a credit in the program.

The Quill is accompanied by a comprehensive booklet, in as much as it takes you through the stages of constructing a small adventure based on six locations. Despite its size, this is sufficient to get across some quite sophisticated ideas, although as soon as you start to try and write your own, you will no doubt come across some problems not answered easily in the first part of the manual.

In brief, after loading is complete you are presented with a large menu, the important options as far as this review is concerned are:

Vocabulary
Message text
Location text
Movement table
Object table
Object start location
Event table
Status table
Test adventure
Bytes spare
Objects conveyable
Permanent colours
Return to BASIC

Alot of the options are instantly obvious, but the important functions are also far from clear. Vocabulary takes you to a sub-menu and allows you to insert all the words you will want the computer to understand. Each word is given a number. Words may be entered, deleted or the entire list printed on screen for checking, or synonyms of a word printed if they exist in the vocabulary already. The program comes with the most important adventure words already in the vocabulary, like North, South, etc.

Location text is another sub-menu. Your first action is to Amend a text since The Quill comes with loation @ (everything is numbered from zero) already written in. Selecting A brings it to view, where it may be deleted and rewritten to suit your adventure. From then on pressing Insert results in a line at the top saying, 'Location 1,' etc. When all the texts are written and entered, the Object Text may be selected. This

lists all the objects which may be manipulated in the adventure and gives them an object number. They must be in the vocabulary, of course. Object Start Location is self-evident. Every numbered object must now be entered so that it already exists in the location in which it will first be found. This is done in the form of '3 4' (obj 3 whatever it may be in location 4, whatever that is). Objects such as keys hidden in drawers are entered as 'not created. Similarly objects worn or carried have a special code to denote this fact.

The Movement table is very important. Here the directions which may be taken from any location to any other location are entered. Again, using this part of the editor is simplicity itself and only requires some careful thought in terms of the actual game rather than the program. If from location 1 you can go north to location 2 and west to location 6 this would be entered as 1 N 2 W 6.

The heart of the editor is the Event table, and it is here that the most complex work is undertaken. This controls the inventory and recall or redescribe functions; here you may set up conditions that will allow objects to be picked up, opened, closed, switched on or off, and inhbitions may be placed in the database which only allow certain actions to take place at specific times and/or locations. One of the great flexibilities of The Quill comes with the flag system used in the Event table. Flags can be set up to inform the computer that particular actions have taken place or not and can be used for scoring, inhibiting actions until conditions are correct, making rooms light or dark if certain conditions are not met, causing messages to appear, and

Messages are created in the Message text, like "I'm hungry." "I'm dying of starvation." "I'm dead!" The messages are entered and numbered so that they can be called up when required.

At all points the adventure may be tested to check that things are happening as they should. When they do not, you begin to realise another point in the logic of using The Quili—the order in which entries relating to an action are made in the Event table.

It would take up far too much space to go into any further detail here, and the booklet accompanying the program is very good despite a very few shortcomings which may become apparent as you go along. But **Gilsoft** are only too happy to help you out if you should get seriously stuck with a problem.

The Quill opens up a huge area of complex programming to thousands of people. might be thought that this single program would ruin the market for the commercial software houses selling adventure games, but I don't think that is at all likely. After all, thousands, millions, of people own typewriters, but how many of them write novels? The most criticial element that you can't buy in with The Quill is imagination and actual writing ability of the literary kind. Even if you are not thinking of writing adven-tures in order to market them, The Quill is a massively worthwhile investment since it is one of the few programs for the Spectrum on the market which will give lasting satisfaction and arouse the creative urge. At £14.95 it is almost fudicrously underpriced for what it does and, more importantly, what it allows others to do.

Already, a number of adventures are available which have been written with the aid of The Quill, a recent notable being the engaging and infuriating Denis Through The Drinking Glass by Applications. But Gilsoft themselves are now marketing a range of adventures written by several authors who have used The Quill, under the umbrella name of The Gold Collection. We take a look at some of them now. Lloyd Mangram



GO NORTH

It's dark in here



# **Africa Gardens**

Producer: Gilsoft Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code Author: Tom Davies

Under the general hading of The Gold Collection, Africa Gardens is one of Gilsoft's new adventure games which has been written with The Quill adventure writing utility. While the game loads, there is a very detailed title-page to admire. showing a low wall, topped with luxuriant ioliage and split by a large stairway leading up to the colonial-looking mansion which tops the hill. A board in the garden says, Africa Gardens Hotel.

After a long journey you find yourself standing outside the faded Victorian guest house under a cold, wintry sky. Even-ing is closing in with misty rain adding its eerily swirling touch to the Hammer horror film-like scene-setter. You are told, 'Mr Robinson insists on your every comfort in the hope that you will extend your stay. Indeed, Mr Robinson hopes that you may be amongst his many guests who feel they can never

leave.

With this chilling formal courtesy, the player is led into a deceptively quiet, elegant and respectable mansion redolent of past guests and their comfortable stays. The mechanics of the game are what we are used to. You can get objects, drop them and 'spell' them, which releases any latent magical powers or breaks other spells. Some objects may help, others may hinder or not be needed until later - and as yet unknown - locations. Africa Gardens uses the Quill's inbuilt objects conveyable figure, which means you may only carry four at a time. A lit candle may be a boon for this murky hotel's upper reaches, and to have the Book of Spells is sheer magic (power to your elbow). Needless to say, Africa

Gardens has its very own secret room, a few priest-holes and its hidden treasure that is very well hidden! Unlike many hotels, this one has only one exit, and the management sincerely hope you don't get to use it!

Although very largely text only, the author has dropped into a few sudden graphics here and there.

# CRITICISM

'Quilled adventures have an instant response to input, so there's no waiting around. The text is very clear, with usable objects tagged by coloured bars, some of which flash. Using Inventory, when you are carrying four objects, can make for a veritable fireworks display of colours and flashing! There are numerous locations and a map is an essential, especially when you have to keep dropping objects in order to pick others up. You can then note on the map where exactly you left them. The hotel's rooms echo with sounds of people never quite seen, cigar smoke lingers in the air, warm food is still on the dining-room table - some of it not very nice at all. The descriptions are excellent, detailed and drip-ping with atmosphere. The nomal horrors of grammar and mis-spelling so common in many adventures seem have been winkled out in this one, apart from the spalshing water in the fountain - but perhaps that's a clue?"

'I think this game has the best atmosphere created by the location descriptions in any adventure yet. You can literally picture the rooms in your mind's eye, even smell them. So, even if you never get anywhere near a solution, exploring the house is an experience in itself. And there's always this nagging feeling that if you start again you might just find that overlooked little room that

will make all the difference. It's

very addictive.
'In most adventures some form of LOOK, SEARCH or EXAMINE seems to work, but not in this one. This leaves you bereft of the usual options for discovering more about an object or a situation, and forces you to be even more ingenious than usual. If you're a sucker for a supernatural challenge then a visit to Africa Gardens may well be beneficial for your health (meals apart - tastylooking dishes can make you throw up when you discover what they really are). The pets, too, can take against you for no apparent reason. Despite your inability to EXAMINE or EXPLORE, exploration or the house and the gloomy gardens with their freshly turned soft earth results in descriptions that might have come from a Dennis Wheatley novel and quitting could well be more to

do with having to keep looking over your shoulder while playing than a failure to find the exit and don't forget, Mr Robinson returns at three . . .

# COMMENTS

Response: Instant Graphics: simple text in coloured boxes, some object graphics and a few location graphics all instantly generated General rating: excellent, addictive and very good value for money.

Use of computer Graphics Playability Getting started Addictive qualities Value for money	80% 60% 86% 90% 93% 94%
Overall	84%

# Barsak the Dwarf

Producer: Gilsoft Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: Machine code Author: P & V Napolitano

Barsak is another Quilled adventure in Gilsoft's Gold Collection. During and after loading it says behind the title 'The Early Days' - does this imply it's only the first of a series? Barsak takes us back to the heartland of traditional adventures, the ancient days of the underworld mythological where the dwarves held the Nine Treasures. They have been lost, and now Barsak seeks to recover them. To complete the game it is necessary to wear or carry all nine treasures and sign the book at the end. Short instructions inform you of some basic facts about Quill adventures, the use of verb nouns format and

the fact that the computer only examines the first four letters of a work, so that there is no need to type beyond that number, also that the adven-ture can be SAVED at any point.

Barsak commences adventure in a dense forest with only one exit North. This leads to a clearing in which stands a large and rather run down castle. Exits to the north-east and north-west end up leading right round the cas-tle in a circle. Leaving the clearing northwards takes you into the castle itself with its numerous locations in the curtain walls, barracks and keep.

Useful objects in this textonly adventure are shown in a darker blue. The first major problem is to lind some food you only have 17 turns before death sets in through starva-

# CRITICISM

Of the four adventures from the Gold Collection, this was the least interesting I thought.





As it is strictly fext-only, it does require more location description than is provided. After all, playing an adventure like this, is a bit like reading a book. The Adventurer needs to have his appetite whetted, and a sense of excitement built up. The descriptions in Barsak are very short and to the point and reminded me a bit of those provided in the manual to The Quill for its tiny example adventure. The limit on surviving before finding food also Irritates, not in itself, that would be fine if there were sufficient interest to capture the player before the limit runs out, but in Barsak it seems awfully difficult to get anything done with what you are offered.

'One of those bare adventures which make you wonder why they're called adventure at all—travelogue would be a better name. But even the "sights" don't amount to very much, and there is hardly anything to do. You can't EXPLORE, EXAMINE, LOOK under or into and the closest! got to food before the seventeenth (dying) move was to be holding a jar of pickled gherkins which I couldn't smash open, even though! was carrying a trusty battle axe. How's that for logic? No doubt someone cleverer will tell me I've missed the point somewhere, but I might have tried harder if I'd been more gripped by it all.'

# COMMENTS

Response: instant Graphics: text only General rating: in this case the excellent implementation seems more due to the excellence of The Quill than to the game itself.

Use of computer	78%
Playability	43%
Getting started	54%
Addictive qualities	42%
Value for money	48%
Overall	53%

# **Magic Castle**

Producer: Gilsoft
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £5.95
Language: machine code
Author: Graeme Yeandle

Magic Castle is one of the earliest adventures written with The Quill and the game has been on the market before the advent of the Gold Collection. It is a rare adventure in that it has an incredibly short intro storyline, 'You have to rescue the Princess who is imprisoned in the Magic Castle.' Very mythical! Surely knights of yore like to know at feast the name of the Distressed?

The program accepts commands of verb/noun form, which is briefly explained, and then it's 'Good Luck – you'll need it!' Having said this, the game deposits you at a bend in a road where you see a pair of miltens and a sign saying, 'Beware of Boobytraps.' Ominouser and ominouser.

# CRITICISM

'Gifsoft certainly seem to have a consistently high standard of adventures, and Magic Castle is no exception. Beware of Boobytraps, means exactly what it. despatched to hell within the first few moves. If you manage to avoid sudden death there is plenty to do, wandering around forests and railway lines picking up objects in your attempt to save darling Princess. I must admit I didn't manage to get into the castle - something bit me, I felt queer, . . I was dead again!

Graeme Yeandle is very sparse with his descriptions but his humour is lethal. He also expects your movements to be sparse and well planned, if not you begin dying of thirst or exposure before getting to pick up that drink, or the warm clothing you omitted to carry with you. All this and traps too, make for a lot of work before reaching the castle itself."

"I felt the descriptions could have been more atmospheric, and I thought the boobytraps gave you no way out once I'd stepped into them. This is an aspect of adventure games not often developed very far—without much warning you're dead. It could be fun to find yourself in a deadly position in which the next move will kill you if it isn't the right one.

Otherwise Magic Castle is a good standard adventure that nevertheless has some oblique solutions to problems, keeps you busy and is well worth the money."

# COMMENTS

Response: instant Graphics: text only General rating: good.

Use of computer Playability 70% Getting started 76% Addictive qualities Value for money Overall 80%

# Spyplane

Producer: Gllsoft
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £5.95
Language: machine code
Author: David Brammer

Spyplane is a lext-only adventure written with The Quill that indicates quite effectively the scope of the adventure idea. Artic's Espionage Island was unusual in that it started off within the confines on an aeroplane, but Spyplace is even more unusual, in that it all takes place within the confines of a plane. Of course, it doesn't take much adjustment of the imagination to see that being stuck in a plane is no real disadvantage i - planes move about from location to location just like people, or adventure characters, and that is just what happens here.

As a wizard, warrior or priest you only have to worry about your various accourrements and weapons — with a plane you have rather more to think about. Pressing Inventory after loading is complete will be a surprise. No adventurer before has set out alrealdy carrying so much. Your equipment consists of radios for communication, HF, UHF and VHF; you have a radar (with a tendency to go unserviceable

at critical moments, but it may be repaired by a ground crew if you land safely); you have ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) which detects the enemy's radar in use (it may go wrong as well); you have sonar and sonobuoys for detecting underwater movements (it's obsolete though and only picks up the very oldest, noisiest of submarines); there's infrared detector, an ionisation detector (for sniffing submarine exhausts), a mission analysis tape recorder, a camera and a computer.

Finding out how to use all this gear and when is one of the primary considerations. Flying the plane is tricky too. A map is enclosed with the cassette which shows the scenery you will be flying over. You start off at 15,000 feet over the Arzelean sea, and your objective is to gain as much information as possible about Turyan military equipment. You should photograph naval vessels and record any other useful items of information. On the map it shows the sea, islands and mainland of Turya and your homeland Oceania and your main base, Kithna, on a friendly island, and the Turyan base of Santos Field, Landing is a fairly complex business first time, involving contact with ground control. COMPA approach, and remembering to lower your undercarriage. Too much activity over. Turyan airspace will alert their fighters which will intercept you and either force you down or shoot you down

Instructions on the insert are helpful, with a list of technical words understood by the computer. There are more than 165 locations, which makes the game quite complex enough to require a map, especially as much of the terrain overflown looks rather similar from high tol.

# CRITICISM

'The first thing to strike me about Spyplane was that it is more like a verbal simulation than an adventure. Use of the radio is somewhat difficult as it tends to alert the wretched enemy to your activities, but landing is hard without it. This



plane is on its last legs, as all the equipment keeps going on the blink! a landing is in order as soon as possible to get everything repaired. The effect of flying a plane over sea and mountainous land is rather well done with the text descriptions,

and the game is fun to play.'
This is an adventure that is not an adventure, more of a searching game but one without much point to it. Nothing much goes on while trying to lind enemy naval vessels, except getting shot down by Turyan lighters. Trying to land at an airfield is almost impossible and using your radio always alerts the enemy and mission. your ruins documentation is very good with the help list of the available vocabulary. Overali, a very undemanding adventure.

# COMMENTS

Response: Instant Graphics: text only

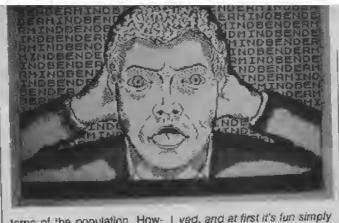
50% Use of computer 55% Playability 68% **Getting started** 50% Addictive qualities 51% Value for money 55% Overall

# Mindbender

Producer: Gilsoft Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: Machine code Author: Paul Styles

Mindbender starts straight off after loading without any clear instructions as to what to do, or what is expected of you. You find yourself sitting in a small office pursuing the everyday tasks of your humdrum existence. There's a phone, a desk diary and a quill pen (!). Opening the diary, you see a proverb for the day which says, 'They who live longest will see most.

Suffice it here to say, that after a few sensible moves, all becomes explained, and an instruction page appears informing you that you have become a victim of the Mindbender Machine. This is a powerful computer-controlled device which has fallen into the hands of a revolutionary group who aim to control the world by manipulating the thought pat-



to explore and see the satirical

use to which so many familiar

things have been put. Excel-

'Mindbender offers a diet of screaming guards, electronic

scanners, torture rooms com-

plete with old copies of Sinclair Users to read while waiting for

that chilling command: "NEXT!" A whiff of James

Bond seems to follow you

round the heavily guarded cor-ridors and lifts of the Mindben-

terns of the population. However, due to your incredible mental ability, you have proved to be immune, which makes you an enemy of the rebels. Now you are to be thrown into their underground prison complex, and your avowed intent is to escape, and destroy the Mindbender Machine and save

This seems a little difficult to do when you find yourself stripped naked in a bare cell with a door and no handle. . .

# CRITICISM

'Mindbender is a text-only adventure but makes up for tack of graphics by being RAM packed with a dry sense of humour and a knowledge that a good adventure is one with a tot of things to do. And you don't have to wait much peyond the teasing pre-instruction sequence to find beyond the teasing action all the way, as you do find your way out of the cell in a most lethally surprising way. The exploration that follows is both extended and wittily exciting, but beware of reading the small print. . .

The author has taken a risk with this adventure of kicking it straight off without an intro-duction. Still it is called Mindbender, so a little mental effort solves the problem and leads into to one of the most convoluted, entertaining adventures I have played in a while. The atmosphere is quite different from that of Africa Gardens, but it really works. Locations are easily moved between with a little care and thought, and this game does not suffer from a lack of things to do or places to get to. It effortlessly conveys the Idea of using a lift (there are lots) with a sequence which tells you, the doors close... the doors open, and then tells you where you are. Like a good novel the action descriptions are to the point and very sudden. I was thrilled by the way I got out of the cell and past the first guard! Mindbender should provide hours of fun before the quest is solder complex. It also goes to show that text-only adventures can really work well, when they're scripted properly. As a result, this one is exceptionally entertaining, it doesn't force you to keep thinking in ridiculous circles all the while, and despite the unfriendly attitude ot all involved, the game has a friendly feel. Very playable, and very good value."

# COMMENTS

Response: Instant Graphics: text-only General rating: entertaining, complex and excellent value.

87% Use of computer 92% **Playability** 76% **Getting started** 89% Addictive qualities 85% Value for money 86% Overall



joking! must be DRAGON YOU KILL THE

CRASH

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# CRASH REVIEWERS COMPE

In the first issue of CRASH (February) we ran a competition designed to discover the best reviewers of games from among readers. The results of this competition should have been announced in the third issue (April). We had, however, overlooked the fact that, as they say, everyone's a critic at heart. By the time the third hundred review dropped into the IN tray, we realised that there was no way it would be possible to process all the entries in time. Hence the one-month

Readers were asked to write three reviews of titles picked from a selection of 79 games, divided into five categories: Adventure, Arcade. Strategy/board Simulations, games, Utilities and Educational.

Each review was supposed to be of between 500 and 900 words. However, due to a rather ambiguous use of language (sorry) entrants were a bit confused as to whether they should write three reviews of this length or three reviews which together added up to this length. As it was our error, no one has been penalised for picking either figure.

As it turns out, it was just as well that there was a large selection of choice, but, in the main, the majority of reviewers opted for the more obvious games and there were numerous versions of Jetpac, Hobbit, Penetrator and Zoom. From among the ultilities The Quili and Melbourne Draw proved favourites. We were pleasantly surprised by how many educational reviews we received, showing that this is a vital area of interest for quite a number of readers.

Choosing a winner and five runners-up has been a difficult task, not only because there were so many entries, but also because the standard was extremely high throughout. A factor common to many entries was the tendency to pick games obviously well enjoyed by the reviewer, thus allowing said reviewer to rhapsodise over the game's finest poins rather than actually criticise it. It's always much easier to say nice things about something than to say unpleasant things In a constructive manner. On the other hand, there were a few entries which positively revelled in tearing a program to shreds as a sort of revenge against the computer game in general!

# WINNER CRASH REVIEWERS' COMPETITION

J. Singh, Hadley, Telford, Salop

# RUNNERS-UP

(Not in order of merit) Steven Wetherill, Kexboro, Barnsley, S. Yorks E.Munslow, West Bromwich, W. Midlands Gary Bradley, Glasgow John Minson, Muswell Hill, London N10 Phil Morse, Welwyn Garden City, Herts

# JUDGING CRITERIA

What we were really looking for were reviews that managed to provide a good, concise description of the game in question and combine it with a sense of humour, personal observation and, of couse, an ability to write in a fluent, interesting way. We did say that entries would not be judged on spelling ability, although it would be important to be literate. In the event, there seemed to be very few bad spellers. A number of entries tried to ape the style of presentation as seen in CRASH, which was not necessary at all, although this did not affect the outcome of the final decision; and other wruters steadfastkt stuck to the format that other well-known computer magazines offer.

The winner and runners-up have provided a varied selection of titles, and although it was felt that the winner stood out, he did so from the runners-up by a faint margin, all in all it was a hard

And so to the most important part - the results

THE WINNER'S ENTRIES It would only be fair to say that in the opinion of the Editor there were several entrants who were able to provide more detailed descriptions of the

games than those that will be found in the winner's reviews. But the winner managed to combine most successfully the ability to enthuse over a game while at the same time keeping a sense of overall perspective. He was able to describe the games adequately and in a very personal way. Most importantly, all three reviews start off in a highly original and entertaining manner, creating instantly an atmosphere which

makes the reader want to carry on reading As printing all the winning entries in one go would take up too much room, we have had to split them up into two sections.

This month the winner, J.

Singh, and runners-up John
Minson and Phil Morse; next month runners-up Gary Brad-ley, E. Munslow and Steven month we will be printing some following further entries which deserve a special mention, May we thank everyone who wrote in to take part in the competition.

In addition to the winner and five runners-up, the following get a special mention, and extracts or whole reviews will be appearing in following issues. Vic Groves, Regent's Park Esate, London NW1 A. J. Green, Toddington, Beds

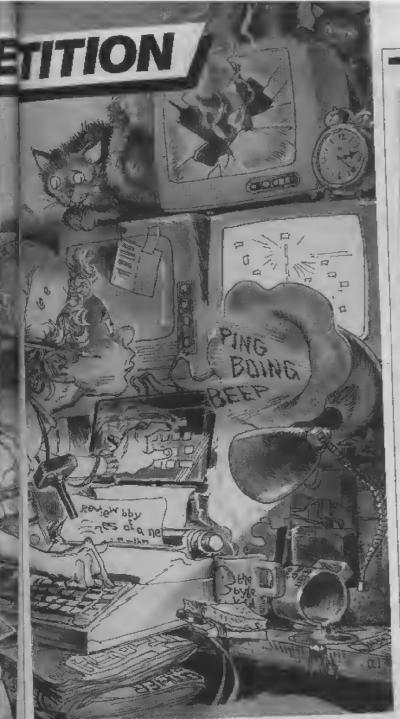
Rob Holmes, Wirksworthy, Derbyshire David Branston, Half Green, Birmingham

S. Gulllerme, London Wa R. Norfolk, Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent H. J. Lock, Wallington, Surrey

David Dursley, Clifton, Bristol J. E. Price, St Albans, Herts







J. Singh Feetball Manager, Hobbit, Jetpac

# **FOOTBALL** MANAGER (Addictive)

It's 4.40pm on a cold winter's day, your team are two goals down with five minutes left to olay. The crowd are booing loudly for such small numbers. and the directors are well aware of the league position and of the massive overdraft you've caused by unsuccessful dealings in the transfer market. Suddenly, a bottle of Scotch and a hole in the ground seem a very attractive 

pressure could only fall on Peter Taylor then you've not played Football Manager - a compulsive game and an accurate portrayal of a manager's problems. You can choose your team, pick or buy players and watch them crash out of the FA Cup or encounter relegation.

The game starts at the beginning of the season in Division Four; after inputting your name and choosing the team that you want to manage

# WINNER . CRASH REVIEWERS' COMPETITION



Jaswant Singh is 19 and lives in Hadley, Telford, with his tamily: mother, father, two sisters and brother. He went to Manor School, just down the road from where he lives, and he left with 10 O-levels and four A-levels. He now works for Lloyds Bank, The CRASH Reviewers' Competition isn't the first competiton that Jaswant has won. In May 1982 he won second prize of £300 as an A-level student in a competition organised by Barciays, writing on teaching and the

microchip. He was also a runner-up in a nationwide competition organised by The Observer and Whitbread of the subject, How the Chip Will Change Society.

Jaswant bought his first Spectrum in October, and says

he prefers playing arcade games. He does not use a joyslick, although he is thinking of getting one soon. We hope that Jaswant will be joining the team of CRASH reviewers very soon.



you are away on your quest for the First Division and Wembley glory in the FA Cup. Of the seven levels of play it is best to start as a beginner since the higher levels would leave even Brian Clough speechless. The game kindly gives you a

hefty bank balance and sev-

eral options before playing that all-important first match. You can list or sell your players, pay off that loan or make it an even bigger millstone around your neck, change the team name or players' names. If a player becomes available on the transfer market you can make

the highest bid you can afford, knowing the high value his team have placed on him. Should you not wish to exercise any options, the program displays the forthcoming fixture and various team attributes such as morale, the strength of the defence, midfield and attack,. If you wish to maintain the present team selection, the program's best feature becomes quickly In apparent. threedimensional view of the pitch, match highlights are played oul with every goal announced American-style by a large scoreboard at the top of the screen with the magic word GOAL emblanzoned across it in giant letters.
The game's end shows the

result and is followed by an update of your financial condition, your gate money, wage bill and weekly balance tells you whether you can afford to pay off your debts or whether you can afford to buy another

These are the attractions of this simulation as it mirrors the problems of football at all evels. The manager has to decide all aspects of his team and the challenge of finding success both on the field and on the club's financial balance sheet provide the compulsion of this game. It can be acutely

agonising to watch your league position fall when the league tables are calculated, and exhilarating when the position improves.

This game has been on the scene for a long time, and its age is betrayed by the presentation, which is not up to the high standards required today. The match highlights are well animaled and the teams are portrayed by little men who run and shoot realistically, but it is let down by the dull grey border which is shown throughout. The options display is duli and response to commands is slow, and the player is kept waiting while the league table is calculated. The game is also slowed down by having to use the number 99 to persuade the program to continue (the choice of this two-digit number for this job is for arcane reasons beyond

explanation). However, this is still a highly absorbing game which, with better presentation, would be a classic. Highly appealing to the football fan and providing a lasting challenge with room for both strategy and that touch of luck that can turn any match. This game will differentiate between fans who believe they can do better than present managers and those who really can. Good value.

me deeper into this complex game. Eventually, by following the plot in the famous book, I found and killed the dragon and laid claim to his treasure. Unfortunately that is only half the game, as the treasure has to be carried back to a now far-distant starting point.

The most remarkable features of this game strike you very quickly. The high resolution graphic displays promised are delivered in the title page when the game is loading; Smaug the feroclous dragon belches such realistic flames at you that I almost felt the need for an asbestos shield! Any adventure played for the first few times invariably seems to result in frequent death, and after restarting a few times the second powerful feature becomes apparent; the characters move indepen-dently of you, so you are never sure whether your two com-panions will help you in the next location or whether they will hurriedly depart to leave you in the company of vicious thugs like wargs or goblins who quite happily decapitate you despite your pleas for mercy.

YesII said pleas for mercy because you can communi-cate with friend or foe depending on your inclination. This device is very helpful in exploiting the abilities of your companions, and much of the game depends on successfully communicating your ideas to allies.

to the fantastic scenario and depth of imagination used in Tolkien's book (whose plot seems tailor-made for conversion into an adventure game), make this program a remark able achievement. The highresolution pictures, of which there are about 30, were drawn

with the help of an artist whose

These features, in addition (Ultimate)

> Wanted: Space Test Pilot Qualifications: Rocket Pilot Licence, elementary technical knowledge and Award of Merit from League of Blasted Aliens Special Details: Volunteer required to assemble and

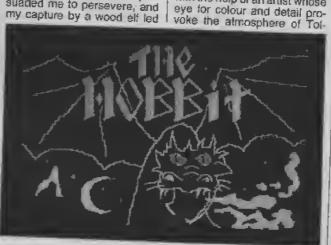
Dangerous conditions (hordes of homicidal entities alien to all known galaxies), but good rewards for initiative can be acquired through a 10%commission on all minerals secured. (High profits assured on every trip.) Lengthy experi-ence in laser weaponry required, strong nerves essential, and a preference for working alone. Xenophobiacs preferred, a pathological tendency to blast everything in sight helpful. Certificate of Insanity not mandatory but also helpful.

# THE HOBBIT (Melbourne House)

stood at the edge of the Black. River (not very wide across) and pondered my situation. I had the short strong sword and the rope courtesy of two dead (literally stone-cold dead) trolls, and the valuable golden ring snatched after great effort from under the nose of a now dead Gollum. (It seems pathological killers are well catered for in this game.) I had been incarcerated in, and escaped from, the notorious Goblin's Dungeon with a little help from my friends. I had met the friendly olf Elrond, and found refuse in Beorn's House. My companions, a singing dwarf and a wandering wizard, had long been left behind. Well armed and supplied, I had crossed mountains, killed goblins and acquired maps. Familiar with the almost certain fatality encountered by taking some routes, I had now reached an impasse, I could see no way of

finding the dreaded dragon, Smaug, or his hoard of trea-Sure.

However, the superiority over other adven-tures available to me, and its unique feature of independentily moving characters, persuaded me to persevere, and my capture by a wood elf led



kien's book at the various locations: the Bewitched Gloomy Place is dark and forbidding while the Bleak Barren Place is suitably inhospitable.

The Hobbit is accompanied

by the original book, which is

followed faithfully, and many clues are to be found therein.

An instruction booklet is also

contained in the package and explains the highly flexible

user-friendly language 'Inglish'

which the game understands.

This, incidentally, was developed by a linguistics expert and allows for longer

more complicated sentences

without the limit of one objec-

tive per sentence. The instruc-

tion booklet is well written and

the game is easily entered into.

The high-resolution colour dis-

plays help your imagination to

envisage The Hobbit's world,

and the response to instruc-

tions is very quick. Quick responses are also required of

the player as The Hobbit plays

in real time, thus adding to the excitement. I can wholehear-

tedly recommend this game as

it is easy for the novice and

provides the veteran with a welcome change from the limited uninspired text-only

adventures. A scoring system (mine is 77.5%) allows for

friendly competition. At £14.95

it is very good value.

Situations Vacant launch test vehicles.



Can you fulfil the above criteria and become the Ultimate test-pilot? This job is not for the faint hearted or for those with lethargic reflexes. The task itself is simple enough; as sole test pilot for the Acme interstellar Transport Com-pany 'you' have to assemble a space ship which is conveniently distributed in bits on the planet surface while fighting off hordes of maniacal aliens. Once assembled the test-pilot must wait for fuel supplies to descent from the heavens or he can supplement his income by collecting the various gems that also accompany the fuel supplies. The screen display shows the planet surface, the rocket parts awaiting assembly and three ledges at various heights. The screen has a wrap around effect which enables the jetman's laser to leave and re-enter the screen at opposite points. The aliens

are of different colours, and are numbers their plemented by new arrivals to prevent you from feeling

Your jetman can negotiate 16 screens and assemble four space ships before the game begins to repeat itself, but getting there is a difficult task as the aliens vary from subnormal laser-fodder to vicious 'intelligent' hunters who follow you around the screen. None of the aliens is armed but collision is usually fatal.

It is easy to see why Jetpac turned Ultimate into a household name virtually overnight; even now it stands out amongst the plethora of mediocre arcade clones. The presentation of the game is excellent, it loads reliably under a beautifully designed title-page which shows almost exactly the cassette inlay illust-ration. The keyboard controls

and the game itself are comprehensively covered within the inlay; however, the prog-ram, once loaded, gives you a choice between keyboard and joystick controls, or between one and two players.

The graphics are colourful and the test-pilot jetman with a rocket pack on his back is accurately drawn with remarkable attention to detail. The animation of the jetman is superb and his movement in flight, and that of the aliens, is smooth indeed. My favourite piece of animation is when the fully fuelled rocket blasts off for another planet with the frustrated aliens hopping about angrily in the flames from the rocket's afterburners. The smoothly animated multicoloured laser blasts and the variform aliens are very eyecatching as well.

The only criticism with this cassette (if one is hyper-critical) is with the sound, which is adequate without being exceptional, and with no catchy tunes being played.

In appraising this game it is difficult to find any real faults. The game is easily played with either the keyboard or joystick. high-resolution colour The graphics and excellent animation routines make full use of the Spectrum's capabilities. Ultimate have gone a long way towards creating the perfect arcade-quality game, and at only £5.50 my verdict is rush out and buy it before Ultimate realise that it's grossly under priced.

tetters. It also meets, head on, the problem encountered in programs like the Sinclair! Macmilian Learn to Read series where a child is asked to copy a lower case letter on the screen by pressing an upper case letter on the keyboard. This program makes a valid exercise of doing just that. One flaw. however. possible appears at this point. Infants are taught to form lower case letters by starting at a particular point and proceeding in a particular direction. The program, when it 'draws/writes' its lower case letters on the screen does not always follow the accepted conventions. Nevertheless, should the correct key be pressed, the matched picture is drawn on the screen as confirmation.

The selection of pictures chosen to represent the alphabet is fair, with a few exceptions. The owl is particularly good, the zip rather clever - but was that really a fish or a vest, and why do people insist upon representing trains with steam locomotives when they went out of regular service 20

years ago?

A primary headleacher was recently enthusing to me over a sulte of programs that he had recently purchased for his school BBC B. The five programs in the suite had cost £1251 In this light, Alphabet, at £5.25, appears to be good value, but this is only really so if no other program treats the subject better for a similar price. Furthermore, the program must be realiable in LOADing. There's nothing worse than a crash on LOADing with a class of small children looking on, laughing at your high-tec antics. I had such trouble getting this tape LOADed that I had to take it back to the shop and exchange it. Even now, it does not always go in every time. If a parent donated Alphabet to our scool software library, I would accept it gratefully, but I am not sure that I would purchase it out o the

# RUNNER-UP

Phil Morse Alphabet, a, b, c . . . lift off, Time

# ALPHABET (Widgit)

Alphabet presents itself in a standard plastic cassette case with a folded card insert that includes the intructions for operation of the program. The tape appears to be recorded on one side. When loaded the program gives you a choice of three activities, although number one is merely an abridged version of number two.

The program aims to give children (Widgit say 'young children' - probably implying 3-6+) a tamiliarity with letters of the alphabet by associating them with computer drawn pictures. The first part of the program allows you to specify a number of letters to work upon and then chooses a random point in the alphabet at which it then starts to draw its pictures. It is a slight pity that an option to specify a starting point could not have been included. The second part of the program works in exactly the same way but displays pictures for the entire alphabet. For each letter, a picture is gradually drawn on a blank screen. The child must then press the correct computer key that corresponds to the first letter of the object displayed. The keypress is read directly and does not need the use of the ENTER key. Should the child press the correct key, he is rewarded with a whole verse of Baa, Baa, Black Sheep through the Spectrum's speaker. Can you imagine what 26 consecutive complete verses of this do to you? Should you choose the wrong key to press, the computer clears the screen and blandly re-draws the picture for you. After six wrong inputs, it was still insisting on doing so without comment or aid.

The third part of the program is rather more useful. A lower case letter is drawn on the screen (using the PLOT, DRAW and PI commands, it would appear) and the child is then required to press the key with the corresponding capital letter on it. This exercise is very worth while for infant children since it extends their scope of letter recognition from 26 to 52



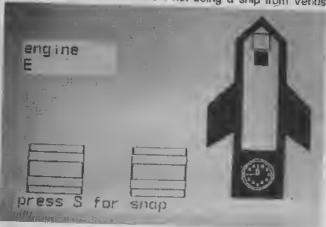
# a, b, c . . . LIFT OFF!

(Longmans/Micromega)

a, b, c . . . LIFT OFF! is supplied in a rigid, colourful box, with the cassette sitting inside in a black plastic moulded insert. The instructions are a printed sheet, folded to make a six-page booklet and contains operating instructions and general enthusiastic paragraphs about how good computer learning is for your child, not to mention high-tec advice like supplementing the work of the program by playing 'I-spy' with the given pupil: ... an . an adventure wonderland of early skills and abilities, they promise. The program is recorded

screen scrolls the appropriate word (all lower case letters) and below it the first letter of the word as an upper case letter. You are then asked to press the key corresponding to the 'next letter.' In response to the picture of an apple, I there-fore pressed 'P,' this being the next letter in apple. I got a disapproving beep-beep from the computer. It was expecting 'B' as the next letter of the alphabet! Such an Indignity, I was glad to see, need not conlinue, because each time a prompt appears at the bottom of the screen urging 'press ENTERING for game.' This is the real meat of the program.

In the Lift Off game, a rocket is drawn on the right-hand side of the screen. Below it, scrolling smoothly along a conveyor belt, are sealed crates. The idea is centred around the rocket being a ship from Venus



on both sides of the tape and on LOADing presents an Infroduction screen where the logos of Longman and Mircomega glide on and off the display to be replaced by a monkey, who introduces him-self as 'Microchimp' and welcomes you to the program. The main body of the program then

When the main body of the program has LOADed two alphabets of bold and clear upper and lower case letters appear on the screen with a prompt press and key to continue. If you do not do so, about 30 seconds later the program goes into the first of the two format options of the program.

The first part of the program is a matching of word and letter to a computer-drawn picture and the sequence always starts at 'A.' In the lower righthand corner o the screen a small but clear picture is drawn in a box, into a box on the upper left-hand corner of the

wishing to load up with earthtype objects to take back for inspection. As each crate arrives below the rocket it stops for four seconds and is 'opened,' its contents being drawn in it, and in the upper left of the screen a word and letter is chosen randomly and dis-played. If the word corresponds to the picture you have just four seconds to press the S' key to register 'SNAP' (That's a terribly short time for a four year old!) If you are quick and correct, the crate is loaded into the rocket. If you make a mistake, one crale is removed from any already loaded. When six crates have been loaded successfully a count-down begins and the rocket takes off quite dramatically, leaving you with the haunting melody from 'Close Encoun-ters!' The 'random' choice of the displayed word, in fact, gives you about a 4-1 chance of getting a snap each time (not a 25-1 chance as you might

Do not be put off by the rather glib and offusive blurb in the instruction leaflet. This is quite a valuable program. My five- year-old and three-year-old children loved the Lift Off game. It avoids the fundamental mistake of trying to do what a real book can do better and concentrates on providing a good supplementary activity to an Infant's early reading work or a junior's remedial reading practice, I would trust its reliability in classroom use as it has always loaded first time, every time, and has always proved to be a most popular program,

# TIME (Steil)

Some educational programs are packed in sturdy colourful boxes which you know must add unduly to their price, but at least they are a strong storage medium for school use. This program comes in a standard plastic cassette case sur-rounded by decorative but useless flimsy cardboard box/ surround, which I dispensed with immediately after removing the instructions on a bil of card which were slipped in the back of the 'box.' The tape, recorded on one side, has three sections: sections one and two having three parts and section three having two parts. The sections can be accessed separately but the parts cannol (well, not without BREAKing into the program and fiddling).

An educational game for

3-10 years,' says the title slip, which acts as a cassette insert. The scope given to this prog-ram by all its different parts should make it a good audiovisual aid in helping children lo learn to tell the time. However, certain flaws mar its overall

Section One deals with time in whole hours. Part One requires the child to stop the clock at a given hour by pressing any key. If successful, a mouse is drawn at the top of the screen, and when 10 have been scored the program goes into an animated (?) routine to the tune of 'Hickory, Dickory, Dock' before moving on to the next part of the section. And herein lies the problem. The, method of reading the keypress is extremely insensitive. Normally the problem with infants using a Spectrum centres around the fact that

they will insist upon 'holding' the keys rather than 'pressing' them. In the normal manner of Things the key will then autorepeat and cause all manner of problems, in the case of this program, however, you have to hold a key down firmly just at the right time for your press to register - certainly no hair trigger here! The programmer must have realised the inadequacy of the system because if the keypress registers at one minute lo or one minute past the hour you will still be counted as right! Normally the clock starts off about 20 minutes before the time you will need to stop it at, and each minute jump is registered in about one second, but occasionally it will start off an hour and a half before the due time, entailing a wait of a minute and a half of real time - and if you cannot get the keypress to register then it REALLY is annoying! Part Two requires the child to type in the hour indicated on the clock face. No problem here - numbers, letters and clock face are all very clear, but there is no screen prompt to remind the child to press the ENTER key after typing in the number. Part Three sets a lime on the clock face and then asks the child to stop the clock one hour later - same

problem as Part One. Section Two deals with time in minutes, or rather in lots of five minutes, I.e., five past or 20 to (but not 17 minutes past). The shading of the clock to give a graphic representation of quarters of an hour is very effective. Parts One and Two require the minutes to be typed in. If you should have typed 20 but typed 15 and yet realised your mistake before you pressed the enter key, you can just continue by typing 20 and it will push the 15 off the input space. (If you press SPACE, then 0 Ø is regiered on the screen for some reason.) Part Three is 'Stop the Clock' again. This time it is ridiculous. When you are teaching time to the minute' you really do require accuracy, but you can stop the clock at 5.14 and still get cre-dited as 'Right' for the required time of 15 minutes past five.

Section Three is very useful for it deals with the very important manipulation of converting 'clock time' to 'digital time.' The proliferation of digital watches has been unfortunately responsible for many children falling to appreciate the real meaning of time lold from a traditional clock face. The demonstration is clear, but it is

followed by another 'Stop the Clock' exercise.

A great deal of work has obviously gone into this program and the gradation of the stages of learning has been well judged, but its overall effectiveness is spoiled by some of the flaws mentioned previously. Infants find the 'Stop the Clock' exercises

almost totally impossible to control. With a little bit of thought and re-programming this would make a very effective and, Indeed, good value program. As it stands, I know of quite a few 'Time' programs on other machines which work far better because they are so much more sensitive to the small-fingered user.

RUNNER-UP

John Minson Chess Tutor, The Hobbit, Melbourne Draw

While the battle to produce the ultimate chess program rages, Artle's Chess Tutor aims itself firmly at the beginner, who has little use for a version which can kick pawns in the face of a Grand Master.

At first sight this is a standard implementation. The graphics are good, though white pieces might lack contrast on the white squares of and here Chess Tutor comes into its own, it does not play an intimidatingly offensive game on the lower of its three livels, so the novice can actually win. Furthermore, it will demonstrate all legal moves during play, and will even suggest a move. But its most useful facility is that it allows the player to cheat.' If you find that you have entered a bad move



the centrally displayed board. Clocks are provided for player and computer, which answers in seconds, though I doubt the absolute beginner needs the pressure of playing against time. At either side of the board is a scrolling display of the last six pairs of moves.

The player always moves up the board, using grid references. Keyboard entries are accompanied by a reassuring beep, with a small tune for Checkmate. There is also an easy-to-use set-up option. This is a user friendly program.

This is a user friendly program. Turning to the tutor side, there is no way that this tape could replace a book for the beginner, despite its ability to display all the move available to pieces. However, having mastered the basics, the best way to learn is by experience,

within your last three plays you can cancel to before that point and choose another option. Imagine finding a human opponent who would allow that!

Quibbles are that its dependence on three book openings, though useful to the learner, can result in a win in four moves by diverging from them! More importantly the cassette intey, which is generally good, says that it allows en passant—it doesn't! Despite this, a useful companion for those learning the game.

Chess is one of the cidest table-top games, but fantasy role playing (frp) is among the more recent its computer equivalent is adventure gaming, and here *The Hobbit* has been acclaimed as state of the

art.

The Hobbit goes much further than most adventures in allowing for the human etements of frp. Input is in Inglish, using simple sentences rather than the more usual two-word commands. Characters have a semblance of independent life too as they wander about the landscape, and you can even converse with them. The alm is to locate a realistic country within the Spectrum.

To do all his in 48K is impressive. It also provides simple but effective graphics, but sensibly only on first encountering a scene, or when requested. The documentation is good, and the inclusion of Tolkien's novel adds to its scope.

After which it seems churlish to criticise, but for me The Hobbit failed to live up to its reputation. The independence of the characters was too obviously random. Gandalf in particular wanders aimlessly. As

to conversing with them, the usual response is less than helpful, and sometimes totally illogical – a 'No' followed by the request being met!

Keyboard response can be a little strange, and with so much to type in a beep would have been useful. The program is not bug free either, though to be fair the booklet admits that this is to be expected in a work of this scale. I have found that the only way to continue the adventure did not appear as an option on one occasion!

The game also lacks the epic prose of the book, and I don't know that the vividness of more words wouldn't have been preferable to the pictures. I feel that The Hobbit suffers from falling between the

two stools of tightly structured brain-teasing adventures and the open, human moderated frps. It is probably worth £14.95 despite this, because it is still addictive, but it left me wanting something better.

The title card from The Hobbit appears again to be loaded into and analysed by 48K Melbourne Draw. This is a complex utility, but documentation is very good. I only discovered one omission in its 22 pages of text, and this was solved by reference to the invaluable summary of commands found on its back page.

Drawing, on the full screen, uses eight-direction cursor control via a logical keyboard layout. Lines can be erased and pixels reversed automatically as they are overwritten. There is no circle command but the production of curves is aided by 4X and 16X magnification.

Having produced a line drawing, areas can be filled with shifted 'F' and ink and paper can be changed without problem. Flash and bright attributes are also introduced by single keys.

You can also create UDGs with this program's draw facility, and both they and full-screen displays can be saved to tape. The booklet concludes with details of how to locate these in your own program.

This is a well-implemented utility for those producing their own games or just for doodling, its great potential means that it needs many control keys, but clear documentation makes experimenting a joy, and it is only limited by imagination and artisitic talent!



# CRASH QUIZ RESULTS

Here are the answers to our quiz in Issue 2 on Adventure games and their cassette inlays.

- Magic Mountain Volcanic Dungeon Valhalla Velnor's Lair

- 5 The Golden Sundial of Pi
- 6 Dr Death
- Manuel
- 8 Land of Beroth
- 9 Murtceps 10 The Hobbit, and The Mines of
- 11 Lady Sincilive and the Pimen The three winners were: C.J.
  Beck, Kimberworth, Rotherham;
  M. Woollen, Sheffield; and M.
  Beck, Tapton Park, S. Yorks.

In our second issue we also ran a competition in association with Fantasy Software, with the 100 first correct entries out of the bag winning a copy of **Doomsday** Castle. The response was tremendous! The 100 winners have already been notified and are now busy lrying to get their hi-scorest A list of winners is availble from CRASH if anyone wants it. Most of the answers were instantly available with a little reading, but the last question

caused some variations in answers

- Quest
- Arcadia
- Ziggy 120
- The Black Hole, and Violent
- Universe
- 6 Urks, Garthrogs, Nucleoids, Orphacs and a Googly Bird Oliver Frey
- 8 We accepted: 103, 103.3 or 103.1/3

# THE MONTHLY **CRASH QUIZ**

EXAMINE the two illustrations below carefully. EXPLORE the detail with an analytical eye. SEARCH for the hidden differences between the two drawings. If you can spot the 12 differences between picture A and picture B, make a small circle or cross over the differences in picture A, and send it to us. Your entry will go NORTH into the Mystery bag to be shaken and drawn in time for the result to appear in the July issue (No 6). The first three correct entries will each win £25 worth of software and a CRASH tee-shirt, and the three runners-up will also receive a CRASH teeand the three runners-up will also receive a CRASH teeshirt each. Entries must be received by May 23. Don't forget to put your name and address on your entry!

CRASH QUIZ, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB





# LIVING GUIDE TO SPECTRUM SOFT WARE



Crash Guide Game of the Month

VELNOR'S LAIR By Derek Brewster

The Black Wizard Velnor has gone into hiding in the goblin labyrinth beneath Mount Elk. After centuries of searching he has finally discovered the ancient tomb of Grako and is about to realise his ambition, to become a true demon on earth. There is only one hope for mankind, and that's you, of course. You must penetrate Velnor's defences, avoiding the traps and surprises before his metamorphosis is complete – but Velnor is a master of illusion.

To undertake this text-only

To undertake this text-only adventure you may elect to go in the guise of a wizard, a priest or a warrior. Each has

its own characteristics. The wizard is poorly equipped to physical combat, but his powerful magic compensates for lack of strength. He has a polymorph spell which turns any non-magical creature into a trog. The fireball spell can be used (at a distance) to consume any living creature within a specific location, and the teleport spell carries you and anything in your possession from any location to the cave entrance. Spells used drain the wizard's spell extraoth

The priest is somewhat better off than the wizard when it coms to comat and he has a number of defensive spells to use, such as a shield, which decreases vulnerability during combat and makes the priest as hard to hit as the

warrior. A healing spell can be used after wounding in combat, and there is also one to dispel any undead creature.

The warrior is obviously best suited to physical combat, the hardest to hit, and can take the most punishment. He has no spells to use, but may make use of any magic object found during the quest.

Combat during the game takes place in rounds where each creature involved is allowed one action, at which point you may continue or flee. There are no graphics in the game, but the border colour alters from white through to black, indicating your state of health.

Although the locations and their positions in Velnor's Lair reman the same from game to game, as do the objects, the living and undead creatures tend to be quite random.

Velnor's Lair was written some time ago, in BASIC, and therefore suffers from hesitant responses, but this is hardly any deterrent to enjoying what turns into a highly complex and convoluted adventure with plenty of humour. Some quite devious solutions are required to problems – getting through the spore-ridden atmosphere of the passage leading to the Goblin's lair is a case in point (but did you remember to pick up the silk handkerchief?). Velnor creates a number of illusions which result in sudden death until you get the hang of treating nothing as an absolute until it's been tested carefully.

Velnor's Lair is definitely one of those games that attract you back for another play, possibly months after your first try, and Derek Brewster has built in enough situations and solutions to make it rewarding. It was originally released under his own company, Neptune, but is now marketed by Quicksilva, price £6.95.

Beginners and Advanced. Works from 40 pre-dealt hands, each hand used to illustrate a particular aspect of bidding and card play. Conventions used are Acot, Blackwood and Staymer, Accepts only correct bid or pard. only correct bid or card.

CHALLENGE (1)

Producer: Temptation, 16K £5.95
Challenge provides two games on one tape, a version of Higher Lower, and Master Code deluxe. In the first you guess the value of the next card you guess the value of the next card turned up and may gamble a winning line-of five cards. In Master Code you must guess the colour code the computer sets up, or set up your own for the computer to guess. Graphics generally very good, but playability seeps away rapidly.

# CHESS

Producer: Artio, 48K E8.45
There isn't much to choose between the quality of graphics in most of the chess programs available, all are pretty good. This program offers seven levels of play, four of which are within competition time limits. Full analysis, recommended moves, save came. eave game

### CHESS

Producer: Psion, 48K £7.95
Psion's sensible graphics make this an easy game on the eye. You may play either black or white against the computer, reverse roles or change the still level during a game.

CHESS TUTOR

Producer: Artic, 16K ps. 95
Whilst Imited in its playing levels, this game allows you to learn chess against the computer, by showing you how. You can also play a game against the computer and all teget



Due to the enormous amount of games which have been pouring from the keyboards of software houses over the past few months, the CRASH SPECTRUM GUIDE has already grown beyond our original expectations. After consulting several of you at the 10th, ZX Microfalr we have decided to split the guide up into two sections, each printed alternate months. The alternative to this would have been to start cutting down the entries, which we felt would rob the guide of some of its value.

MICRO GAMES ACTION

Programs are listed under convenient headings with the programs listed alphabetically by title. The software house is shown, together with the memory required, the retail price and author where known. The figure in brackets after the price indicates the issue of CRASH in which a full review for the game may be found (where it exists). Please note that references to joystick provisions invariably refer to the type of interface that may be used.

# CARDS, BOARDS & GAMBLING

We were tempted to call this section CAROBOARD GAMES. Sadiy, quite a lot of games in his section are pretty filmsy. Part of the problem is that as soon as you remove the physical reality of dealing cards, gembling real money or playing with friends, the game loses a lot of its interest. But in cases like the Psion Scrabble, the programs are not only Scrabble, the programs are not only excellent, but some of the tedious retting up is taken away. It's abviously a question of personal choice ...

ARCTURUS
Producer: Visions, 48K £6.95 (3)
An awful lot of memory and effort go
into the long-winded and entirely
irrelevant history of this game's name,
but it turns out to be none other than a
3D noughts and crosses played on 4 x
4 grids, four of which are stacked one
on top of the other. A winning line is a
straight one up or across a grid or
vertically through the grids, diagonals
included. Two players may oppose
each other, one player play the
computer, or you can have the
computer play against itself. The computer, or you can have the computer play against itself. The program is a slick one, but its main drawback is the complexity of the option menu that poses a major task in logistics just to get to play a game. Cursor keys are used to place your move, so AGF or Protek joysticks may be used. General rating: very good for puzzle enthusiasts, especially with its 9 skill levets. Overall CRASH rating \$7%, machine code.

# BACKGAMMON

Producer: CP Software, 48K £5.95
Backgammon is a board game using dice and counters: Its complexities are too detailed to go into here, but it is important that the cassatte inley contains full instructions for the is important that the cassette inter-contains full instructions for the beginning. The CP Software version does so. Full board and counter-display with two on-screen dice. For a single player against the computer,

# BACKGAMMON

Produces: Hewson, 16K £5.95 Clear and simple graphics make this a good version which does well within 16K. Full instructions on program and game contained in

Insert, invalid moves refused with alternate moves suggested. On-screen dice, four game options. For a single player against the computer.

# BACKGAMMON

Producer: Psion, 16K £5.95

One can usually expect a lot from Psion, and this game is no exception. Very good graphics and instructions with four skill levels, on screen or throw your own dice.

Good demo mode.

# BRAINSTORM

Producer: Micromege, 16K £6.95
The object is to find hidden numbers under a covered grid. Your are given 100 tries per grid. If you open a grid square, or 'door', and the answer is wrong, then the number under that wrong, then the number under that square is uncovered for about one second before disappearing again – a memory testing game. The second program, Puzzler, has the computer generating a random letter matrix and your job is to rearrange the matrix so as to match the computer's letter matrix. Not an easy game, mind boggling in fact.

# BRIDGEMASTER

BRIDGEMASTER

Producer: Bridgemaster, 16K 224.95
If Backgammon is a difficult game to explain, then Bridge, the ultimate card game, is impossible.

Bridgemaster is a marvellous beginner's course in learning how to play the game. The package includes a computer tape, a commentary tape, very well read and which takes you through the early playing stages, and a bock Regin Bridge with Reese, which is included for general reference. The demo 'automode' plays through a hand for you in combination with the commentary tape. This is very much a tutorlat program — you can play through a hand where the program only allows you to play the card it expects, beeping if you play the wrong one, in this way you become accustomed to the Bridge 'conventions', and it shows you how to take tricks, bid and make contracts and the escierica of scoring. Uses 55 different deals for teaching. If you want to become proficient in playing Bridge then this is an excellent program, making fine use of the computer and well worth the high price.

Producer: CP Software, 16K £5.95 Two programs, each at £5.95.

# CHESS IL

CHESS II

Producer: Artic. 48K 19,95

There's much argument over which is actually the best chess program for the Spectrum. Artic have produced a number of fine tapes, but this one stands out well against everyone else's. There are 1000 levels of play — you choose tha maximum response time for the computer, and that dictates the skill level. When pitted against other computer programs, Artic's has consistently best them — so they claim! But see for yourself. You may change sides, add or remove pieces, list or print out all moves made, and the computer will recommend a move.

# CHESSPLAYER

CHESSPLAYER

Producer: Oulcksilva, 48K 06,94

The Chess Player speaks, at least briefly when he announces himself with on-screen remarks like, that was a pathetic move? A useful feature is the ability to alter the colours of board and places to suit yourself. Six skill levels with varying response times. A good starter's program, because the computer does lose on the lower skill levels, which is encouraging! Computer-recommended moves, but watch it closely — it cheats sometimes!

# CYRUS IS CHESS

Producer: Intelligent Software, 16K/48K £9.95 16K/48K £9.95
This program is winner of the Second European Microcomputer Chess Championship. The 48K side has more sophisticated options such as altering the colours of board and pieces, printouts and game saving. Cursor keys movement allows you to analyse a move or take the piece back. Illegat moves are buzzed. Eight skill lavels and a problem level system whereby the computer can be instructed to look for a mate in one, two or three moves, Comes be instructed to look for a metal in one, two or three moves, Comes complete with an instruction manual and a library of opening moves, Excellent value.

# BERBY DAY

PERBY DAY

Producer: CRL, 48K £5,95

This race simulation game offers all the fun of the gee-gess without the stress of attending a meeting; or replaces those parlour versions with the rolled out track and wooden horses that were once popular. Up to live players may bet either for points or pence— if it's money, you keep your own book, three levels are offered and when all is ready the computer scrolls the trace before offered and when all is ready the computer scrolls the race before your eyes (machine code) slowing down to slow motion as the race nears the finish line. If required a photofinish is provided, Good instructions and graphics.

GOLD COLLECTION

GOLD COLLECTION

■ GOLD

GOLD COLLECTION

GOLD COLLECTION .

The Quill is a major new utility written in machine code which allows even the novice programmer to produce high-speed machine code adventures of superior quality to many available at the moment without any knowledge of machine code whatsoever.

Using a menu selection system you may create well over 200 locations, describe them and connect routes between them. You may then fill them with objects and problems of your choice. Having tested your adventure you may alter and experiment with any section with the greatest of ease A part formed adventure may be saved to tape for later completion. When you have done so The Quill will allow you to produce a copy of your adventure which will run independently of the main Quill editor, so that you may give copies away to your friends. The Quill is provided with a detailed tutorial manual which covers every aspect of its use in writing adventures.



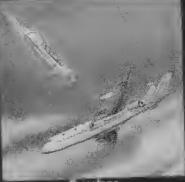
Magic Castle

Rescue the Princess from the Magic Castle but beware of Vampires and Booby Traps.

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Escape from the infamous prison împossible, maybe impossible atternative have you?



pyp ane

Can you survive and complete your mission high in the sky over enemy territory?



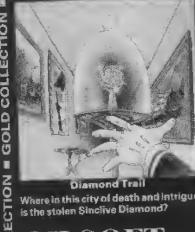
Mindbender

Only you alone can save the world from the terrible power of the Mindbender:



Barnak The Dwarf

Help Bersak recover the treasures of his ancestors from the underworld of



Where in this city of death and intrigue is the stolen Sinclive Diamond?

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## BOMINGES

A competent version of the famous pub game, marred by a complex and unorthodox way of present the play. Dominoes may be familiar to most, but if not there are sensible. but if not there are sensible instructions — provide your own beer though

# DOMINOES

dominutes

Producer: Phipps Assoc, 16K £4.95

Phipps' version is somewhal better
as far as playing goes, with the
familiar right angle shapes making
life easy, adding up the adjoining
ends to make multiples of filve or
three, 72 points to win.

## DO NOT PASS GO

Producer: Workforce, 48K £5 95 A very good computer version of THAT FAMOUR GAME whose name THAT FAMOUR GAME whose name no one dares utter for fear of law suits. Up to six players can take part with all the usual features like buying, selling, mortgaging, houses, hotels, jail, passing GO, Community Chest and Chance. Each player gets £1,500 to start and the screen displaye all the relevant into you could want. A pad and pencil are handy though, if you don't want to keep asking the computer to list your possessions. Very good graphics within the Spectrum limitations. The game can be saved at any time.

DRAUGHTS
Producer: Clasis, 48K £4.95 (3)
Oddily, Draughts is a board game which doesn't seem to have attracted much computer attention. In this version there are 10 levels of play with zero being the lastiest and easiest.
Traditional rules are used with computer reliaing lilegal moves.
Pieces reaching the opposing back file are automatically promoted to Kings. The game boasts excellent, clear graphics and uses the traditional algebraic notation for entries, One player versus the computer, for what it is and for its price, well recommended.
Overall CRASH rating 71%, machine code.

# FRUIT MACHINE

Producer: DK Tronics, 48K E4.95
The title says it all—the only money you can lose here is the price of the cassettel Features nudge, hold and gamble with good, colourful

# GO TO JAIL

GO TO JAIL

Producer: Automata, 48K, £6.00
Automata's version of THAY
FAMOUS BOARD GAME differs
from the one by Workforce in that it
doesn't show the whole board at
once, preferring to concentrate on
three squares at a time. This does
make the graphics a little easier on
the eye, but removes some of the fun
as well. 2-5 players can take part,
with the computer acting as either a
banker or a player (useful because
you can play in one against the
computer). The computer is a pretty
mean tycoon as well. Contains every
usual feature of the board game and
is good value for money.

# INVADER CUBES

INVADER CUBES
Producer: Oasis, 48K £4.95 (3)
Invader Cubes is a novel presentation
of 3D Noughts and Crosses. The game
is played by one player against the
computer on four vertically stacked 4 x
4 grids. What makes this game an
excellent version is the novelty of using
space invaders as markers, and its
utter simplicity in play. Despite being in
BASIC, the program runs guite rapidly
and without any of the confusing frills
normally attached to 3D Noughts and
Crosses for the computer. All entries
are prompted and then verified before

your space invader jiggles its way over to the lower of grids and places itself. A winning line results in all four winning tine results in air pour responsible invaders jumping up and down gleefully. The graphics are extremely effective and our reviewers put this version down as one of the best despite its tack of skill levels. Overall CRASH rating 69%.

Producer: CRL, 48K £4.95
A fruit machine game with full features including, nudge, gamble and hold. You start off with 200 units and each spin costs 10. A neat touch is the money token rolling along the bottom of the screen into a slot, and the payout, which on a jackpot can take almost half a minutel Written in basic, but reasonably fast and Producer: CRL, 48K C4.95 basic, but reasonably fast and

# JIGSAW

JIGSAW
Producer: Artic, 48K E5.95
This program contains two screen pictures which are broken up into squares. Only one picture may be attempted at a time. The pieces are at muddled up, and the obvious object is to recreate the picture. It's done against the clock. The two pictures consist of large graphics, one is St. George and the drapon, and the other is of an old fashioned steam engine. Althought the game is quite difficult to sort out at first, it soon becomes easy and then boring. Very good for younger children though. Overall CRASH rating 47%, machine code.

JUMBLY
Producer DK. Tronics, 48K £5.95
Another ilgsaw puzzie geme, but with
more pictures than Artic's game offers.
The object again is to recreate the
original picture from the pieces. The
graphics are very good, with plenty of
delait and smooth animation. The
sound is also excellent, with one or two
different tunes for each puzzie. Good
instructions. Overall CRASH rating
64%, May be used with Kempston
joystick. Machine code.

# LAS VEGAS

LAS VEGAS

Producer: Temptation, 16K £5.95

Author: Neil Streeter

This lape contains 2 programs.

Super Nudge'and 'Black Jack'. The first is a fruit machine which features the usual options: nudge, hold, gamble and cross wins. The nudge feature is slightly odd in as much as you can't see how many you have won and they only seem to nudge in one direction. 'Black Jack' is Pontoon, the card game where you try to get as close to 21 as possible. You can't spit hands, burn or buy cards. The graphics are good. You can I spirl hands, burn or buy cards. The graphics are good, especially on the cards, but both games suffer with the usual lack of fun in playing gambling games against a computer, Overalt CRASH rating 48%. Programmed in Basic with UDG.

# MASTERCHESS

MASI ERUBESS

Producer: Mikrogen: 48K-26,95

A program with len playing levels, options to alter the board and place colours to auri, setting up the board—good for problem solving—recommended moves and game saving, all make Mikrogen's chess game a strong contender.

# MONTE CARLO

MGNTE CARLO
Producer: Micromage, 18K £4.95
Two games on one tape, casino style
Blackjack (Pontoon) and Craps. The
Blackjack games has line graphics
and plays the standard rules, but
suffers from a lack of interesting
options, like buying cards, burning
end splitting. The Craps game is the
famous dice game of American
movies and features a hand shaking
the dice until you press the key to
release them. Despite the usual lack
of atmosphera that you expect when
playing communal games with a
computer, this program is an
attractive one, even addictive,

BTHELLI
Producer: CDS, 16K 25,95
The 18th Century board game is simple to play, difficult to win. Also known as Reversi, there are several versions. This is a standard one. You can play another person, play the computer, or watch the computer play itself (opeful for learning, but not much fun). If you want to play another person, then you're better off buying a real board game version. Computer-recommended moves if stuck.

# DEVINITY

Othingy
Producer: Severn, 48K, £4.95
Author: Tony Churcher
Quincy Is Yahtzi by another name,
basicelly a five-dice game that
resembles Poker Dice except that
the dice are traditionally engraved
with dots 1 to 6. Severn's version is
probably the best, with clear onscreen instructions as to the
complexities of play (which are
numerous). 2 to 6 players may take
part with individual screen cards to
keep score. The graphics are very
good, and if you like these dice
games then this will be a must for
your collection. It's also excellent
value for money.



# REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

Producer: Artic, 16K £5,95

Author: Brian Needham
In Beflections you are presented with a
grid in which mirrors (invisible) have
been placed at a forty-five degree
angle. The object is to locate them all
by shingling a torch into the grid and
deducing where the mirrors must be by
where the beam emerges from the
grid. Each time you use the forch you
lose points, and you are only allowed
three goes before making a guess as
to the position of the mirror for which
you are searching. Each correct guess
reveal the mirror in question. The
grame appeals for a white but has
nittle lasting value. Cycredi CRASH
rating 60%, machine code.

# REVERSI

Producer: Artic, 16K £5.95 Clear colours make this easy on the eye. Game features four skilt levels and game save.

# REVERSI

RAVENSI
Producer: Simplair, 16K E7, 95
Excellent graphics, nine skill levets to choose from and you can watch the computer play or play against the machine. Hi-res graphics and machine code. One of the bast versions, but so it should be for the price.

# ROULETTE

Producer: Micromega, 16K £4.95 If gambling games fack excitement when issued forth from a TV screen when issued forth from a TV screen then at least they must have exciting graphics to make up for it. Unfortunately the wonders of the spinning routette wheel are denied us in this game. All you see its a fine drawing of the wheel while a flashing number indicates the wheel numbers. All bets possible, fun in occasional doses.

### SCRABBLE

SCRABBLE

Producer: Psion, 48K 916.95
It may seem a lot of money to pay
out, but if you enjoy playing
Scrabble, you'll love the Spectrum
version — even if you don't like
Scrabble, you'll love the Spectrum
version! There's no denying that this
is a fabulous program. It allows you
to do anything stall you would do in
real Scrabble, and if you're playing
against the computer It allows you to
cheat — but you wouldn't do that,
would you! Graphics display is
crystal clear; your tile rack can be
juggled to make up words, the
computer tells you what your word
will score and let's you take if back if
you think you can do belier. Up to
four players, the computer may be
one or all of them. You can select to
see the computer thinking if you
wish. Only one failing, the Spectrum
seems to get away with some rather
odd two-letter words—and you
can't challenge its 1,000 word
yocabulary, Highly recommended.

# SLICKER PUZZLE

SLICKEN PUZZLE
Producer: DK Tronics, 16K E5.95
This puzzle is one of the best and most complex. There are 16 x 16 different character positions, which makes for a lot of combinational in a sense the screen resembles a 20 Rubic cube, the colour of the blocks of which are muddled up but he corporated. Here. muddled up by the computer. If you beat or equal the computer's number of moves to solve the combination, then you are give a garbled message. The better you do, the more readable the measage becomes, if you get less than the computer you will have to try egain from scratch. The graphics are good, although not important, and the colour is very well used, as is the sound. (Skill levels). Overall GRASH rating 62%, machine code. machine code

# STAR TRADE

Producer: Digital Dexterity, 48K £6.50 Author: J. Plunkett Star Trade is an intergalactic version of Author: J. Plunkett
Star Trade is an intergalactic version of
Monopoly' with a few variations. The
property board is laid out in quite a
different fashion, but bears similarities
in that properties come in blocks
depending on their purchase price
range. There are other recognisable
features like GO. Jall (or Remand
Block), a safe area (or Dock) and
chance cards. The properties have
exotic nemes like Phobos, to or Ceres,
and between 1 and 9 players may take
part against each other and the
computer for Trader). The instructions
are on one side of the tape and the
game on the other, but the game is run
by computer prompts throughout, so
this presents no real problem. The
graphics are efficient, although a little
hard to read because of the crammed
screen detail, and the colour could
have been better used to alleviate the
overall drab effect. An above average overall drab effect. An above average board game for those who like the type. Overall CRASH rating 65%, machine

# SUPERCHESS II

Producer: OP Software, 48K £7.95
There has been much argument between Artic and CP Software over claims for this program, Artic saying their equivalent game beats CP's avery time. Nevertheless the their equivatent game beats CP's every time, Nevertheless, this varsion is very good, with clear graphics, the option to change playing colours and seven levels of play. Several standard openings programed, recommended move and a very helpful HELP which will list the available options.

# TOOTIE FRUITY

Producer: Dream Software, 48K C5.95 Lo. 95
Author: S. Hillyer
Another one arm bandit game with
nudges, holds, gamble and jackpot
payours visible at the side of the
display. Thrais a version we haven't
been able to see yet, so judgement is
reserved.

# VOICE CHESS

Producer: Artic, 48K £9.98
With similar specifications to the 'Chess' program from Artic, this version will talk you through your game and make comments. Seven levels of play, save, recommended moves, set up board. A good solid game.

Producer: Workforce, 48K 15,50
Yahtzi, which also gets cafled
Yangtze, Yahtzee and even Yahlcee,
is a complex dice game, not unlike
poker dice, it is based on the throw
of 5 dice, which are shown in the
upper half of the screen, while the
lower half shows the poker scores,
pairs, three of a kind, full house etc.
Since between 2 and 6 people can pairs, Inree or a kind, full house etc. Since between 2 and 6 people can play, it can be party fun time, but I still think this sort of game works better with everyone facing inwards, rather than in a line watching TV.

# ZX DRAUGHTS

ZX DRAUGHTS

Producer: CP Software, 48K £5.95

Oddly enough, considering how
many chess, reversi and card games
versions, there are, there is really
only this Draughts program.
Perhaps the game is too simple to
excite programmers' attention,
which would be a mistake, since
Draughls is quite hard to play well
There are ten levels of play against
the computer. Illegal moves refused
and you are forced to take prices by
jumping if there is the option. Pieces
reaching the back file opposite are
automatically made into kings. Good
value for money and one of the more
absorbing board games.

# SPORTS SIMULATION

Alhletics on the computer screen may seem contrary to the vigorous nature of sport, but a number of programmers have turned their hands to simulating various sports with mixed success. At least playing them on your Spectrum is somewhat more active than watching the real taking on telly.

# BOWIS.

BOWLS

Producer: Lotus-Solt, 4aK DA.50(1)
Author Derek Jones
Il you're fed up with zapping allens
orroaring round the race track, why
not retire to the peace and quiet of
an English bowling green? This
game offers the services of the
computer throws the jack' and then
each player has 4 alternative turns to
bowl, the object being to get your
bowl as close to the jack' as possible. Cursor keys 5 and 6 are
used to determine direction of
throw, and the strength is
determined by choosing the weight
of ball, a heavier ball going further.
There is a feature which
diagramatically shows how close the
bowls are to the jack after each
throw. The game is neatly executed
but suffers the common fault of
sports simulations — the lack of
ultimate reality undermines the skills
required to play II. However, it is
good value for money and will
constitutes appeal to many. Overall
CRASH rating 57%, good if you like
theidea. BASIC.

CHAMPIONS

CHAMPIONS
Producer: Peaksoft, 48K E5.95
One of the earlier games or houball for the Spectrum, which leatures rioting fans, dub bankraptcy, promotion and relegation s well as the matches themselves. There are five learns in each division, including yoursell, and you can pick any name for your own team. You start in the fourth division and play 16 games to get promoted it you reach the top of a division by the end of the 'season'. If you get to the top

of Division 1, there is a chance of playing the European Cup. Players may be bought from other clubs and from the transfer market, their prices vary according to the players' skill fevels. Factors such as gate money and wage bills are taken into account as well as random elements under the heading of News, which may tell you that rioting fans have caused thousands of pounds of damage. There are no graphics, and the game is quite fast to play. Written in BASIC. Overall CRASH tating of 53%.

# CHAMPIONSHIP DARTS

CHAMPIONSHIP DARTS

Producer: Shadow, 16K

Author: D Lockett
You might think a game of throwing skill would be difficult to translate into a computer game, but Shadow Software have managed very nicely in this cute and gentle game. After a Nicellite card, a large, traditional darts' board appears. By pressing any key you freeze a tast moving aweap line, which determines the segment your dart has hit. At the baard showing the rings — double, single, trable, single, outer buil, buil. It's elegant, simple and very ellective. A sensible damo/instruction mode shows you how to do it. You can select the number of points required for a game, enter the two players names, and the program quides way through select the program quides way through a side the program quides way through game, shiper the two players names, and the program guides you through three shots in each turn. You must linish with a double or but to course. Perhaps not assectly exciting, but a fine game and worth the money

# CRAZY GOLF

CRAZY GOLF

Producen Mr. Micro, 48K £6.95
This game works with the Currah
Microspech unit to give a talking
caddy. The game follows the pattern of
a crazy golf course, in which you must
get your ball around the obstacle to
put it. Direction is made via a pointer in
the top left hand comer of the screen.
The game is fairly difficult to play, with
shots requiring good judgement in
direction and force. The line drawing
graphics are only fair and rather dull,
and what might have been an
enthrating game turns out to be only
average. LOADing can be a problem
too. Joystick: Kempston. Overall
CRASH rating 49%, machine code.

# FOOTBALL MANAGER

Producer: Addictive Games, 48K £6.95
Author: Kevin Toms
Universally agreed as one of the best of Spectrum games of any type. This is as much strategy as simulation as you choose a team from 64 on offer, and try to work your way up from Division four to win the FA Cup. The background to the game is quite realistic, with players losing strength value and gaining it by resiling a match, morale worsenling with lost matches, declining crowds and resulting loss of gate money, and all the technical and strategic problems of a club manager. Having selected your team, studied the opponent's doesler, you can sit back and watch the fully animated, edited highlights of the match! An amazingly engressing game with seven levels of play and highly recommended. Producer: Addictive Games, 48K £6.95

GOLF

Producer: Abrasco, 16K £8,95

For 16K users this le a very good program with quickly assembled graphics that clearly show positions of tee, green, fairways, bunkers, tree hazards and rough. There's no animated golfer as in the Virgin game, but it's made up for with clearly visible balls that follow a path of your shot. You can input commands to use a 1 or 3 wood of given strengths, or 1-9 frons which, ask wenther you want a soft or hard strike. If you pick between 7 and 9 fron, you are realistically asked

whether it should be a chip shot or a pitch. When both players are on the green the screen scrolls to a close up which uses a 20 foot scale for judging the distance of the putt. The only drawback might be a tendency to crash if an incorrect variable is antered. An attractive and responsively fast game, One/two responsively fast game, One/two players and choose how many holes to play.

FOLF
Producer. Virgin Games, 48K 15.95
Author: David Thomson
In this version of the noble game,
one to four players may take part
and play between one and eighteen
holes, choosing handicaps up to 29.
The higher (worse) your handicap
the more erratically random your
shots become. There's an option on
five clubs with a choice of strength
between 0 and 10. When your
selection has been made and you
have estimated the compass point
direction in which to swing, an
animated goffer appears and hits the
ball. Once on the green a putter is
automatically selected, While fun to
play there are several drawbacks.
The graphics are very slow, each
hole being built up character line by
character line. The random quality
of the handicap system undermines
its value—everyone should choose
azero handicap! And the compass
points are needlessly difficut as
North keepes shifting direction with a zero handicapi. And the compass points are needlessly difficult as North keeps shifting direction with every hole. Worst of all Virgin have been salling the game with a glaring bug — when asked if you would like another game, there's an incorrect command in the BASIC which stops the program dead. It's easily corrected but anough. corrected but annoying

Producer: Artic, 48K £5.95
Sub-littled St Andrews, this game is based on an accurate reproduction of the world famous golf course. Each hote is drawn out showing the well known details and a brief description and history is given. One of two players may take part, playing a proper game or single holes of their choice. You are asked whether you wish to use a wood or Iron, strength of shot, expressed as a percentage, whether you want the shot to go straight, fade or hook, and what angle, Arriving on the green the screen cuts to a close up for the putting. The graphics are black on green and very simply drawn. The program is in BASIC so after typing in figures you ENTER, but words are accepted automatically. The temptation to enter W for wood will result in a break into program.— the main drawback of an otherwise interesting game. interesting game,

KNOCKOUT

KNOCKOUT

Producer: Mikrogen, 48K £5.95 (2)

Author: G. Smelicross

Compete against the computer or up to 3 players in what is effectively a Spectrum version of the popular board game 'Rebound'. The object is to 'Brow' a ball into a 'G' shaped board, rebounding it off the comer walls, to come to rest in firmly defined scoring area. Each player has 4 balls to a frame, opponents taking it in turns to play each ball off the frem, The ball is positioned on the start fine vertically, and an angle and strength determined for the shot, it is possible to knock an opponent's ball into a better or worse position. This is a good conversion of a floor-played game to the computer, and aithough not particularly addictive in the usual sense, certainly has its own charm and is very playable.

Control keys are simple and done to on-screen prompts. Generally good value, overall CRASH rating 62%, machine code.

POGE
Producer: Abrasco, 48K £5, 95
Author: K Eaves
A sudden flurry of interest in Pool makes for some interesting comparisons. One of the newer ones is this version from Abrasco for two lo sight players, with the option of playing a league. As usual, the cue ball is controlled by a small cursor dot—in this case the cue ball travels towards the cursor, which is controlled by use of the cursor keys (slow and fina tuning) or the zero key for fast positroining. A very clear strength bar indicator is used to determine the distance the cue ball will travel, and is positioned with keys 5 or 8 (min/max). Considering the limitations of the Spectrum and Travel and is generally, the graphics are outle good and the movement of the limitations of the Spectrum and TV screens generally, the graphics are quite good and the movement of the balls is convincingly accurate though terribly busy. Game rules are a close copy of the real game, the balls are marked as spots or stripes and you lose a turn for a foul shot. Good.

PEGL
Producer: Bug-Byte, 16K £5.95
This version is unusual in that the cue ball cursor may be placed anywhere on the table, which allows for greater control over the shot. On the other hand this is not a very close copy of the real game. In addition to the cue ball, there are six other numbered balls (you score the value of the potted ball) and each of the two players takes it turn, playing through until all the balls have been potted or he has missed three consecutive pots, or potted the cue ball in this sense the game is a bill limited. The graphics are clear atthough more use of colour could have been made — all the balls are red, but much bigger than in the Abraseo version. Practice probably makes perfect, for it isn't as easy to play as it looks.

Producer: CDS, 18K D5.95
Author: Mike Lamb
CDS have done very well with this version. It isn't a classic stripe or spot game. There are six balls, three red, three blue. The cursor moves round the edge of the table with key S, picking up speed as it goes. A 4-block bar indicator is used for strength of shot, a sensible arrangement where each key stroke adds a block. The graphics are very good, with neat movement and perhaps the best stopping effect of any of the pool/snooker games available. One or two player games, scoring and hi-score. Good value. Machine code.

**RACING MANAGER** 

Virgin Gemes, 48K £5.95 Author: Mark Alexander Author: Mark Alexander
Half Strategy, half simulation, this
game lets you hire a trainer and select
the horses you wish to enter for a
season of racing. The object is to get
through to the Derby end win thi 25
meetings take place before that big
day, with each meeting having several
races, so this is not a short game.
Money is spent on training, leading and
entering horses into races, it can be
made back with prize money and
betting on the races. Each horse you
have has strength ratings expressed
as fitness and speed factors, a best
distance factor, and the type of going
the horse tikes. All these factors must
be taken into account when entering a
horse for a race, bets of between £10
and £10,000 may be plead on any horse for a race, Bets of between £10 and £10,000 may be placed on any race and then you can sit back and watch the race furlong by furlong, or, to speed things up, watch only the last three furlongs. The grephics are reasonable and the game quite compelling, although the package could have been stronger if it had included some more technical details on the especial of betting. Overall CRASH rating 58%.

ROYAL BIRKDALE

ROYAL BIRKDALE

Producer: Ocaan, 48K 66.90

Author: Devid Thorpe

The golf club on which this game is based, is a famous one, and the program is claimed to be accurate in detail to the real course. The object is to play a round on the 18 holes in the least number of shots. Direction, strength and type of shot must be calculated bearing in mind the lemain. A similar task awaits on the green. The program is in BASIC and therefore has obvious limitations, it's an interesting idea to base golf games on real courses, but there are better implementations of the game available.

Overall CRASH rating 47%.

SNOOKER

SNUKER
Producer Visions, 16K £8.95
Author: Tim Bell
A very good implementation of the classic game with a cue bell cross hair that can be moved anywhere on the table. A bit more sophisticated than most other enocker/pool games, it is possible to select spin in this game. possible to select spir in this game. The graphics are average, and a little hard to see when selecting a colour to play, but their movement is quite good. Works with Kempston joystick, good instructions, only one skill level of course. Overall CPASH rating 62%, could have been higher but for the price. Machine code.

SNOOKER

SNOOKER

Producer: Artic, 16K £5.95
With the minimum space devoted to score lines or embellishments. Artic have produced about the biggest playing table for their game, which is a classic six colour, nine red ball. Instead of a moving cursor, the cue ball rediates a direction indicator line controlled by the cursor keys, and the sirength of shot is given by using keys A to Z. The table is correctly marked with D and spots. Balls pocketed appear in a green. correctly marked with D and spots. Battle pocketed appear in a green band at the bace of screen and the score is automatically kept and displayed at the base of the table. The ball colours work quite well and the movement is reasonably smooth, atthough the balls do stop very suddenly. Machine code.

STAR SOCCER

Producer: Watson, 18K £5.95
This is a quite different football game from Football Manager by Addictive, and is really a computer version of those old football games where you controlled your men with rods and handles. It's designed for

two players, but since you need much of the keyboard, quick change overs are essential! After loading overs are essential! After leading you are presented with a Super League of eight well known teams and aleague scoring table. Having decided which team each is to play, the two opponents may select a playing formation; 3-2-5; 4-2-4; 4-3-3; or 4-4-2. The playing field now appears with all the numbered players of each side set up ready for players of each side set up ready for the kick off. The 'players' are not Ine kick off. The 'players' are not animated figures, but numbeterd squares, unlike the well-known Atari version. Passing the ball is done by selecting the player's number to whom you want to pass, and the game ratites along with both sides attempting to tackle, intercept and score goals. Goal kicks and corners are featured but not side throws. This is highly addictive to play — It could even be the end of football as we know it.

TEST MATCH Producer: CRL, 48K £6.98
This game should bowl over all cricket fans (non-fans will find it all double-dulch): Fast action with no wait times makes it a speeded up wait times makes it a speeded up version of the real thing. Participation is very timited, however, you're allowed to select the bowlers in your team and order the batsmen, but from then on the game runs itself automatically. Only in the event of a good midtleld shot do you have to sit up and decide whether the bastmen should risk a run or not. In lact the odds seem pretty good since the fielders are not very accurate long shots at wicket. accurate long shots at wicket.
Features howzzata of bowled,
caught, run out, lbw, and follows real
gricket very closely with the
exception of Australian beer cans on

# SIMULATIONS

Under our headings a Simulation Game is one which conforms to the delinition that it attempts to simulate real situations of a mechanical nature, and that part of the game is to use instrument displays to control the game as well as usual visual guides.

LOMIRAL GRAF SPEE

ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE
Producer: Temptation, 48K t5.95 (1)
Author: Simon Manetield
Set in the South Atlantic during the
Second World War, this game
recreates the actions of the German
pocket battleship Graf Spee. The
aim is to sink allied merchen!
shipping and survive attacks by
allied battleships. 2 screens provide
you, as Captain, with a sea map of
the Atlantic and indicate your
position and that of enemy shipping.
You can direct your ship towards the
enemy, and when close enough,
change to a sea level view ready to
singage with either gens or
torpedoes. Instruments show you
your speed, heading, enemy
position and distance in yards. On
sighting the enemy, his ship appears
gradually above the horizon, if
armed, it begins firing back. A
serious drawback is that to keep the
enemy in your gun sights you
actually have to come to a slop—
not very realistic. The option menu
tor controlling your ship is also
extremely finicky. Average block
character graphics, good sound and
use of colour, 7 skill levels. Okay for
its type. Overall CRASH rating 54%.
BASIC.

Producer: Protek, 16K £5.95 Producer: Protex, 16th 25, 95
Take command of a modern BAC 111 jet alritiner end land it safely all
Edinburgh airport. You can also take
off and land at a second airport. The

controls are necessarily simplified from the real things, but they are complicated enough and some knowledge of how big jets actually fly helps. There is no view through the cockpit window unless you are on a correct flight approach path, when the runway lights will appear. Extensive instructions book daunting, but are worth digesting so that you don't have to panic at the daunting, but are worth digesting so that you don't have to panic at the last minute. Operates in real time, but things happen-quickly when the airport is approached Sensible, clear graphics, reasonable control responses, all in all an absorbing game.

CHECKERED FLAG

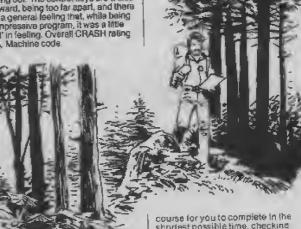
CHEORIERED FLAG

Producer: Psion, 48K £6.95 (3)
Not the definitive Spectum version of Pole Position', as many hoped, but an excellent simulation of motor racing. Here you may drive three different types of car around ten different racks. There are no other cars on the road however, so this really isn't a game in the usual excitement sense. Very reasonable 3D effect for the road and flattish landscape, which does include mild hilts as well. Hazards include mild hilts as well. Hazards include bends, water and oil on the road and gless which can cause blow outs. Instead of seeing the car in full perspective, you' are inside, your view looking out. The control keys are a little awkward, being too far apart, and there was a general feeling that, while being an impressive program, it was a little 'cold' in feeling. Overall CRASH rating 71%, Machine code.

good map of the whole area. It takes many minutes to fly over the whole map. Instrument flying is essential to success and, as usual, there is a lot of accompanying instruction to digest. The cockpit view is simple but oddly realistic. If you enjoy contemplative games, then this is still one of the best, although welch out for some oddfiles if you try looping the loop — the program deesn't seem to cope with that!

THE FOREST

Interones and a time and a special and a spe enclosed in the program, only a tiny bit of it stready mapped for you. Included is a 12 point orienteering



FIGHTER PILOT

Producer: Digital Integration, 46K £7.95 (2) Author: Dave Mershall One of the lastest simulation programs yet. You are in control of an F15 Eagle yet. You are in central of an F15 Eagle capable of enormous speed and a cruising speed of 800 knots. The graphics of the instrument panel are very impressive and allow the plane to be finely controlled, just as well at those speeds! A menu offer options on Landing Practice, Flying Training, Ali-to-Air Combat Practice (and the capability). Plind I pading Cress Minute. Air-to-Air Combat Practice (and the real thing), Blind Landing, Cross Winds and Turbulence, and all this on three skill levels. An excellent MAP facility may be selected, which shows the locations of the four air bases you are protecting in the Air-to-Air Combat mode. Enemy aircraft air seen in very good 3D pressenting and the doc finhis. mode. Enemy aircraft are seen in very good 3D perspective and the dog fights are highly realistic. Definitely one of the best flight simulation games for the Spectrum with easy controls and an axcellent flight manual. Overall CRASH rating 86% machine code. Highly recommended.

FLIGHT SIMULATION Producer: Psion, 48K £7.95 rsion, 48K f.7.95
An early Spectrum program, and always popular, this simulates the effects of flying e single seater light aircraft, including landing and laking of. There are 2 airlields (one very difficult and surrounded by hills), lakes, beacons and a very

course for you to compare in ma-shortest possible time, checking each point in the correct sequence. The display shows you the terrain six metres in front and uses symbols for the different terrain, trees. for the different terrain, trees, shrubs, lakes, towns etc. Special point features are displayed as messages and an eye level indicator tells you whether the ground is falling or rising, so you can easily follow the contours. In addition you can go off and chart the unmapped areas. The program will draw contour and terrain meos for you or areas. The program will oraw contour and terrain meps for you of make up 3D views. A massive program, excellent value, recommended. Overall CRASH rating 88%. M/C and BASIC.

HEATHROW - ATC

Producer: Hewson Consultants, 16K 67.95
Author: Mike Male
If you get a fittle queesy flying, you could always have a go on the ground as an air traffic controller—
In this case at the busy fleathrow airport. You must direct incoming flights from the holding stacks safely onto the runway. Your instruments include radar, showing the aircraft call signs, blips and trafils, displays giving the altitude and beering. call signs, blips and trails, displays giving the altitude and bearing, heading and speed and size of the alroraft. There are 7 levels of play including a demo mode, and you can progress to handling mixed traffic, restricted alropace and outbound flights, as well as cope with emergencies like unknown aircraft including and for all the state of intruding, radio failure, loss of runway and on board instrument failure. After this you'll never fly againt Recommended.



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Producer: Proteit, 48K E7.95 (1)
Author: Rod Hopkins
This is a submarine simulation game set off the coast of Garman Halegoland (North Sea) during the Second World War. You are commander of an 'S' type submarine and your mission is to find an enemy sub in the same area and hunt it down. Salling too close to the coast may result in your hitting a mine or sub in the same area and hunt it down. Salling too close to the coast may result in your hitting a mine or running aground, 3 screens show you the control room, the chart room and the periscope view of the surface. The instrumentation is quite complex, including ballast indicator, hydroplanes, battery charge, engine speed, rudder engle, heading, asolic, echo sounder and much more. In the periscope you may see enemy stripping and enemy aircraft which will hunt you if you stay on the surface too long. Under water you use electric engines and recharge the batteries on the surface, when you use a diesel engine. The accompanying booklet is very detailed and essential reading. Good graphics and rehistic sound, real time operation. Oversil CRASH rating 61%. BASIC and M/C.

# NIGHTFLITE 2

Producer: Hewson Consultants, 18K

Producer: Hewson Consultants, 18K £7.95
Author: Mike Male
Drastically upgraded from their original 'Nightfille', this flying simulation allows you to pilot a light alroraft at night, taking off and fanding or do acrobatics. New features are a shifting perspective which allows you to see the correct view of the runway lights from whatever angle you approach the airport, many more lights from surrounding hamlets, end a realistic changing angine noise depending on speed. Instrumentation is complex and includes variable flap controls. 7 modes of operation compax and includes of operation including two auto-pilot modes and a training mode, and 6 difficulty levels. After-flight debylef feature and certificate print-out, 100% M/C.

# STRIKE ATTACK

Producer Micromart, 48% £6.95
The scenario promises an excellent game — your mission as a Phantem pilot is to penetrate enemy territory game — your mission as a Phantom pilot is to penetrate anemy territory and bomb a specified target. Stacked against you are AA artillary. SAM missiles and enemy lighters. Entry point is at 70 miles, 10,000 feet, 90% rpm, 400 knots and 90 degree heading. Chances of attack depend on the flightpath — below 2,000 leat there's only a 10% chance of attack, which is still very frequent. The technique for avoiding total oblivion is to break (hard turn) at 4 or 8 gees and change attitude rapidly to avoid missiles. If you stick to the rules in the 12 page manual you will be able to escape avery attack. The display shows a "radar" picture with you in the centre, target to be bombed, and enemy positions. There are also details like speed, heading, fate of climb, target distance and extra messages for enemy attack. The poor variation of attack and slow disptay speed (BASIC) and the not too exciting graphics are a bit of a let down considering the potential, but if you are an enthusiast of RAF stang you may appreciate the extra you may appreciate the extra messages as the program is written by a FL Lt, J T F Dyer.

# STRATEGIES

'Strategy' says the dictionary, 'is General ship, the art of war; management at an army or armies in a management at an army or a trace in a campaign — art of moving or disposing troops or ships so as to impose upon the enemy the piace and time and conditions for tighting preferred by eneseld. The best strategy game attempt to simulate real conditions in a wide spectrum (ahem) at activities, and ask you to manage your forces, whether they be armies old and new. whether they be at these and and now, or an awkward work force. Most computer versions are lengthy games, so it's important to be able to 'save' them for another convenient time.

Producer: C CS, 16/48K; 15/6.00 Start off with £3 million and lumin into £30 million and take over British Airways, Hijacks, strikes, crashes and rising fuel costs all take their toll, if you enjoy strategy gemes revolving around empire building, then CCS are the people for you. Clear text and illustration graphics Good value for money.

# APRICALYPSE

APUTALYPSE
Producer: Red Shift, 48K £9.95
'Apocalypse' is a game of nuclear devastation. It's a long two-sided load and a game for 1-4 players. It can take between four hours and four years to play and if you outgrow the scenario. Red Shift have others to add on. A large selection of maps allows the action to take place anywhere and at almost any period. anywhere and at almost any period.
You set up the empires, their centres, their armies and weaponry.
This is a near deviate. this is a very flexible game of real war strategy which should keep the addict going for a long, long time. Very good value.

# AUTOCHEF

Producer: CCS, 16/48K £5/£6.00 You have a million in capital and must increase this to 25 million in must increase this to 25 million in the shortest possible line. The problems you must cope with include wary shareholders who are watching your every move, essessing your performance and who may even force you'to resign if you're not doing well. Inflation, a sluggish economy and copious strikes are other problems you will face in this lively strategy from COS. It's all very well eating fast food, but how fast is the money?

# BARON

Producer: Temptation, 48K Author: Simon Mansfield The game is for 2 to 4 players and takes you back to medieval times (spart from one noted anachronism). At the start of the game each player is awarded a castle, lands, workers and money in the form of 'dubloons'. The object is to plant your acreage, feed your workers, hire mercenaries (and feed them), buy them weapons and raid your neighbouring barons to take

money, slaves and land. Slaves are useful because they do as much work as your workers but only eat half as much food. The weapons your mercenaries carry depend on what you spend and can include lasers (?) There are natural disasters to contend with like plague and rats, and literated some workers. and II you feed your workers generously they'll give birth to bables. Games of between 5 and 55 nations, games or between 5 and moves may be pre-selected, the winner being the most powerful baron at the end of the slected number of moves. There are no graphics to speak of and the response times are quite long. Overall CRASH rating 48% if you're in a group, BASIC.

## BATTLE 1917

PATTLE 1917
Producer: C.C.S., 48K £6.00 (2)
This program won the 1983 Cambridge Award, it is a unique mix between a conventional wargame and chess, with the board, or war zone, taid out not unlike a chess board. The opposing armies face each other in formalised ranks with the battle area between them. This is full of obstacles like barbad wither miners, water and lonests. ranks with the paties are assessed them. This is full of obstackes like barbed wire, mines, water and loreats. Each side has a King, artillery units, tanks, eaveing and infrantry units. The object of the game is to capture the opponent's King. The units move as a group, but can be split up into individuals by the terrain. Each unit has its own characteristics in how much it may move per turn, and what terrain type it may or may not cross. The moves are prompted on screen, so extremely complex wargame instructions are not necessary. If you like wargames, this is quite an original concept with reasonable graphics despite the BASIC. Amusing Instructions in the 2-part load. Overall CRASH rating 63%.

# BRITISH LOWLAND

BRITISH LOWLAND
Producer: CCS, 48K £6.00
Author: K A Wells
If you've ever thought about putting
the British car industry back on its
feel, here's your chancel You are the
Chalman of a small sports car
company, and by careful
management you must accumulate a
bank balance of £1,500,000. At the
start you are presented with a bar
chart showing the last 6 months
production, histogram showing days
lost over last 6 months, a status chart showing the last o months production, histogram showing days lest over last 6 months, a status report, and a bank account and profit/loss account for each month. From then on a monthly option menu allows you to: open a new production fine, to:se one, raise the prices of cars, lower them, or continue on with the other problema is hand. These include annual pay negotiations, industrial injury, a wide range of union demands like longer les breaks and shorter working hours, and discipline problems like pittering. The game offers a wide range of strategic options and takes into account the morale of your workforce if you are too sutocratic. Good, clear lext graphics back-up the well thought graphics back-up the wall thought out program.

# CORN CROPPER

CORN CROPPER
Producer: CCS, 48K £6.00
Okay cornballs, time to get your hands dirty down on your 30 acre farm! There's the buying of seed crop to do, ploughing, planting, irrigating, harvesting, storling, hiring of hands, spraying the bugs and keeping an eye on the bank balance. Weather plays an important part, and as usual with these games life just isn't a doddle. Good, cleer and colourful graphics. colourful graphics.

# CONFRONTATION

Producer Lathlorien, 48K £7.95 (3)
This is a wargame for two players versus each other, you can't play one against the computer. There is a master program to which various

scenarios may be added, one is included with the game, but others will become evallable later. Each player is gwen 12 various units which he may move across the map and which include many modern equivalents that may be omitted if playing a game set in an earlier period. Like most other an earlier period. Like most other hothlorien wargames, each player must race all his units in turn and by one square. This makes it a long and involved game unlikely to appeal to anyone except wargame addicts. The screen is very crowded and the symbols are hard to read without practice, the graphics are slow because of the BASIC in which the program is written. Overall CHASH rating 45%. rating 45%

UALLAS

Producer: CCS, 48K £8.00

The name of the city has become synonymous with oil and JR. The object is to take over the Ewing Empire or be taken over by them if you lose. A map of the Dallas area is divided into a grid and you are offered the option of buying up likely sites for drilling. You can do surveys before or after buying, move rigs to the site, drill, set up production and before or after buying, move rigs to the site, drill, set up production and build pipe lines. The more successful you are the more likely you are to be hit by sabbtage and other disasters. Oil prices fluotuate all the while, affecting your revenues. A good-strategy game on the whole, although the random the state of the rest of proper to intrude the elements do seem to intrude too effectively.

### DICTATOR

Producer: DK Tronics, 48K E4.95 One of the best early games from DK. You've just become President of DK. You've just become President of Ritimba, an equatorial barana republic. Your reign will be brief and unenviable. How long can you survive your greedy and hated secret police, bullying army, irritating guerillas, bothersome commiss, snot-nose landlowners and revolting peasants? Money may be borrowed from the Russians or Americans (if they feel like it). As the game progresses the options run short. Can you make it to a wealthy exila or will, you die at your post? Recommended.

# **EVEREST ASCENT**

Producer: Richard Shapherd, 48K

You have 20 days to reach the summit of Everest, starting off with firnted funds (money comes in from sponsors if you seem to be doing well, but it isn't credited to you if well, but it isn't credited to you if you've lorgotten to buy a radio). You must hire Sherpas with homely names and varying strengths and the habit of deserting you if you're not ted properly. Their equipment and supplies are expensive and they eat like horses. Neat graphics and the familiar prompt menu for buying and moving about. It takes some getting into and early expeditions usually last a short time until you realise what's needed most. A good average. average



GANGSTERS! Producer: CCS, 46K £6.00 (1) Author: P Boulton The object of this smusling game is to become top dog of Spectral City. You're gang leader up against 4 other rival gangs trying to own the city through operating speakeasies, distilleries, casinos and brothels. This can be done by buying up



various joints, raiding those of your rivals, bribing the appropriate authorities, assassinating your rival gang leaders and generally carrying on like an utter rotter. The success of your gang will rely heavily on their numbers, equipment and morale, all of which must be carefully or which must be carefully regulated. The game follows the traditional strategy formula of option menus and results. The Moral Majority are unlikely to approvel Good vatue. Overalt ORASH rating 59%. Offers 9 skill levels, BASIC.

# GREAT BRITAIN LTD

UNITAL BRITAIN LTU

Producer: Simon Hessel, 48K £6.95
You are Prime Minister of Great
Britain and your aim is to stay in
yower as long as you can. Having
chosen which party you wish to
represent you are presented with the
state of the nation, the rate of
inflation, unemployment rate,
exchange rate for the nound and inflation, unemployment rate, exchange rate for the pound and dollar, your popularity rating, netion's balance at the bank and so on. Factors taken into account are population ligures and relationship of OAPs to children, number of compnies in business, tax income from various sources, expenditure. from various sources, expenditure for the previous year, and the prices of commodities. The general aim is to work towards the General Election and win it. A highly complex program which takes you to the thrills of Election Night — and beyond (if you're a success). Recommended.

# GENERAL ELECTION

Producer: Buy-Byts, 48K £6.95
Author: I-Wason and D Wolff
The object is to win more seats in parliament than your opposition (It's a realistic simulation anyway). There are 100 constituencies split up into are 100 consituencies split up into tive regions. In each region seats are graded as Very Sale, Sale, Marginal or Very Marginal, From the title card of Maggie shouting the game's title, it's all go. Unfortunately so much of the game is a dice-throwing board game and it's beset by piles of confusing instructions as complex as an explanation of Einstein's relativity laws. In the end, rather bering to play. boring to play.

# INHERITANCE

Producer: Simon Hessel, 48K £5.95
This is a two part game, Great Uncle
Arbuthnot is dead and you inheril
his entire estate, but first you mustprove your financial acumen by
Jurning £10,000 into £100,000 in 28
weeks by investing on the stock
market and the Metal Exchange, You

can also gamble at the casino or at the races. Only on completing part one can you load part two; here you have got the manor house plus its ailing soft drinks factory. The aim is to find the secret formula for Paradise Cola and successfully market the drink whilst coping with fires, strikes and frauds. The game is all text but it moves at a lively pace and is playable from the start.

# IT'S ONLY ROCK IN ROLL

IT'S ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL

Producer: K-Tell, 46K 66,95 (3)

Part of a 'double bill' with Tomb of 
Dracula; neither side of this lape 
comes up to scratch. It's Only Rock 'N' 
Holl purports to be the sort of strategy 
game where you pit your wits against 
the established music industry to 
become a pop star. Having chosen a 
name for yourself you can do concerts, 
tours, make records, buy status 
symbols, write and record or self 
songs, and hire yourself a manager. symbols, write and record or sen-songs, and hire yoursell a manager. Writh the money you have at the start doing any of these things except hiring a flea-bitten manager is out of the question. Select CONCERT and you'll be told busking is more your line. The question. Select CONCERT and you'd be told busking its more your line. The song writing facility is the only lively element in what is otherwise tedious and unrealistic. Overall CRASH rating 41%, BASIC.

# JERICHO 2

Producer: Elephant, 48K £5.55 A text strategy game in which you, as Joshua, have a go at bringing down the walls of Jericho. You are down the walls of Jericho. You are provided with certain stege implaments like ballistas, pattering rams, towers and certs, plus 300 men. The art is to assign men to particular tasks while juggling with the necessities of building further siege engines, gathering the material for them, keeping food supplies up and attacking the week points of the walled city. Unfed men desert — It's a tough life.

JISSAW
Producer: Artic, 48K, E5.95
As the title says, this is a computer jigsaw puzzle. The program contains 2 pictures, an old steam train and St George and the Dragon. Both graphics are very nicely done and can be seen for a flash during the loading, or on pressing the Help key. During play the pictures are divided up into squares and muddled up. You use the cursor keys to shuffle. up into squares and moddled up. You use the cursor keys to shuffle them into the correct sequences. Depending on the selected skill level there ere more or less squares to shuffle. Our reviewers found the game amusing and difficult at first, but unable to hold the attention for long. Overall CRASH rating 47%. A game with a difference and likely to appeal to puzzlers.

# JOHNNY REB

Producer: MC Lothforien, 48K £5,50 Lothlorien specialise in battle strategy war games which require hours to play properly, involving inlitiary units of varying strengths and related weaponry. Each player in turn Is allowed to move some or all of his units their pre-ordained

number of squares, and then use them to attack. The game is set in the American Civil War and the idea is to capture the enemy unit's flag. The graphics lend to be small to fit in everything and it takes some time to get the hang of how to play, but once that's done there's hours of fun if you like war strategy games. It has proved very popular.

Producer: Virgin Games, 48K £5.95
Author: Stephen Webb
This is a puzzle game where the object is to lit 22 irregularly shaped pieces into a square shaped grid. On the left is the blank grid, and to the right the 22 vari-coloured shapes, each Identified by a letter of of the alphabet. To fit a piece you select the one you want by pressing the appropriate key, whereupon a black cursor dot appears in the grid which can be moved by using the cursors to the centre of where you want the shape fitted (this is the grid square which corresponds to the aquere in the shape, where its identifying letter is situated). The shape may be notated before fitting using key 9. It may also be removed from the grid by using key 8. It coks simple but is likely to take a player a long time to sort out and if you like these puzzles, offers good value Overall CRASH rating 53%. M/C.

### LOST

Producer: Virgin Games, 48K £5.95 Author: John Hunt Author: John Hunt Lost is a graphics survival adventure. You are lost in a forest clearing, surrounded by mountains with only 5 days supply of food. There are animals and snakes which pop up. now and again and may be killed if you're quick enough off the mark—or they may get you. A complex list of graphic symbols at the start tells you what you are seeing, fruit trees, caves, water, settlements etc. You can move 4 characters at a time, but this allowance decreases over poor this allowance decreases over poor terrain. Weather plays an intepertant role and between each move the weather forecast is displayed. This is built up so slowly it renders the game almost unplayable after a few minutes. Cotour, graphics and sound are all quite well though out, but in the end it becomes more but the the end it becomes more batfiling than enjoyable. Keyboard response is poor, no joyatick option general rating "average, CRASH overall 57%, BASIC.

Producer: Incentive, 48K E5.50 (2)
Author: R. Carler
The time is now. Can you do better
than Maggie and ride out three terms
as Prime Minister and survive two
General Elections? This highly
complex strategy game runs along
conventional lines of offering a menu of
cations and problems to be solved.
You with have to balance the books
over such matters as VAT, income
Tax, Govi Loans and Contracts,
Corporation Tax, Grans to Industry,
Public sector spending, Govt wages.
Pensions, Unemployment Benefit,
Child Allowances, Foreign Aid and
interest on borrowing. The
personalities involved bring you into
constant conflict over things like wage
demands. The game is accompanied Producer: Incentive, 48K £5.50 (2) constant conflict over things like wage demands. The game is accompanied by a booklet called "A Pocket Guide To Running Britain." The text is clearly laid out end responds fast to inputs. This is no toy government game, but a fully blown program that should tex anyone's brain. Overalt CRASH rating 76%, machine code.

# PARAS

PARAS
Producar: MC Lothlorian, 48K £5,50
If you enjoyed 'Redweed or Johnny
Reb' then you will find Paras a
suitable follow up. The object is to
bring the war to a swift close by
destroying the enemy's line of
communication — a bridge. To do
this your 15 men are dropped behind
enemy lines. They may be equipped
with 5 different weapons and an
unlimited number of grenades. As in
the previous war games each man
may be moved according to a strict
table of squares allowed, and then
allowed to fire before the enemy get
their turn. Unlike the 2 previous
titles, Páras has far more
complexities built in and will provide omplexities has far more complexities built in and will provide endless fun for war game addicts. Bright graphics, but many symbols to digest. Good instructions enclosed on a leaflet.

# PLUNDER

PLUNDER
Producer: CCS, 48K £6.00
Author: D G Evans
Plunder is a pretty massive strategy
game where you find yourself in
command of a British Galleon with
the object of stopping the Spaniards
from running gold from the New
Lands to Spain. There is a short,
medium and long game option with
3 skill levels for each. The screen
gives you e high resolution map of
the North Atlantic, divided into
squares by a grid. You move your
ship about with the cursous, seeking
enemy galleons, troopships and enemy galleons, troopships and battleships. If one is encountered you may attack or retreat. Attacking gives the option of firing or boarding or both. Firing on a galleon may be a mistake—it it sinks then you lose its gold. Depending on your battle success the morale factor of your crew goes up or down. There are several ports open to you which several ports open to you which must be enlared via an arcade style sequence lor docking. In port you may take on extra crew or weaponcy, have repairs made, buy food, lawels or opium, or sell if you already have any. The display informs you at at limes of the gold stopped, gold acquired and spent, weather conditions (which affect finding enemy shippping), number of victories, meniost, ships sunk and so on. The length of the game is determined by the number of moves you make, and these are also determined by the number of moves you make, and these are also displayed, All in all, an entertaining game, but one that can become repetitive with playing.

# PRINT SHOP

PRIME SHUP
Producer: CCS, 48K E8.00
Another standard from CCS in which you get only 12 weeks to make the profit which will stop the bank from closing down your printing business. Work scheduling, stalling, purchasing and estimating to clients for their work are aimed to be accurate the purchase. test your business adumen to the hit. Each month you receive a balance, sheet to see how well you have done. This is a text game with option menus.

# PRIVATEER

Producer: MC Lothforien, 48K £4.50 It's a good price but reflects the fact that this is an updated ZX81 program and looks like it. A 3-phase haval war and books like it. A 3-plase lieval war game which gives you command of a Rôyal Navy ship fighting French Privateers. It is a suitable game for an introduction into the whole battle strategy area, but too simple for hardened veterans.

# RED BARDN

Producer: MC Lothlorien, 48K £5.50 This is a real time simulation of World War I plane to plane serial combat with you, as the pilot of a Sopwith Camel, pitted against air aces of the German airforce. A main menu offers 6 options; Enemy plane spotting, which at length shows you what an enemy plane is doing

graphically; Training flight, which familianses yoù with the controls and graphic display; Level of play—there are 19. Campaign game, in which enemy planes are sent up against you; Design your own game, where you can after the specifications of the planes and plats; and Quit. The main problem with what might be a really good game, is that the cockpit view is very disorlanting. If an enemy is behind you, you get a view over the back of your prane, which doesn't seem very realistic—it's almost as though you were flying backwards, or sideways if you look left or right. Controlling your aircraft takes some getting used to and the real time element is likely to put off shoot em up addicts. However, for those who enjoy simulations, this one represents lairly good value for money. lairly good value for money.

### REDWEER

RECWEED
Producer: MC Lothforien, 48K £5.50
A scenario borrowed from H G Walls
puts you in charge of London's
defence against the invading
Martian war machines, whilst semisentient Redweed threatens to put
yourunts out of action as it grows
across the map, You have many and
varied units from heavy artiflery to
flamethrowers (used against the
radweed). Your enemy is three war
machines and your task is to out
funk them. Small but effective
graphics and a menu driven game graphics and a menu driven game where you and the Martlans take your torns in a very civil sed manner. Fifteen skill levels to test your lactical abilities. Good value for this popular game,

### REFLECTIONS

Producer: Artic, 16K £5.95 Author: Brian Neenan This is an original strategy/puzzle game where you must move a torch around the edges of a 12 by 12 grid and discover the locations of invisible mirrors by seeing where the torch beam is reflected. You can select between 10 and 39 mirrors. If the beam is reflected when 'fired' you may then elect to guess the cell in which the mirror is placed and then its angle. If you are wrongyou lose points and you spend a point for every firing of the torch. The graphics are simple but effective and it requires quite a bit of thinking. Likely to pall with much playing however. Overall CRASH rating 50%. M/C. game where you must move a torch

# **ROMAN EMPIRE**

Producer (MC Lothlorien, 16K £5.50 in this cast of thousands it is the first century BC and you are the Emperor. (A working knowledge of 1 Claudius' might be useful but isn't essentially What you have to do is simply congular ten countries which hate you and do this meaning. simply conquer fan countries which hate you, and do this wiping out their troops (under-paid and under-trained) with your 90,000 men. There are nine generals on your side, including yourself, and 18 legions of 5,000 men each. The idea is to build up armies from the men, appoint generals and faunch campaigns to persuade the barbarian hordes how wonderful life under the yoke can be. Three levels of difficulty.

# SAMURAI WARRIOR

Producer: MC Lothlorien, 18K £5 50 You are a Samurai warrior living You are a Samurai warrior living during the Kamakura period in Japan (1185-1333). There are no bonus pomis for killing Richard Chamberlain, but there are for defeating your opponents and surviving into old age. You can, of course, commit Seppuku if you would rather. Up against you are six groups of bandits and nine other samurai of differing abilities, any of whom may be superior to yourself. Challenges and hunts occurrin simple graphics and are not very good Results are in direct relation to the combatants' strengths. Seems pointless.

# SHEEPWALK

SHEEPWALK
Producer: Virgin Games, 48K £5.95
This can't go under an' arcade'
heading and should probably be,
consigned to the dustbin anyway.
But if anything does come into this
game it is a touch of strategy and a
hell of a lot of luck. The object is to
get your electronic coffie dog to herd
a load of sheep into a pen and
prevent them drowning or champing
the crops. It's ell incredibly slow and
hedrous to play, and very BASiC.

# SHIP OF THE LINE

Producer: Richard Shepherd, 48K £6.50

You an officer in the Royal Navy or the 17th Century, in command of a ship of the line in the Mediterranean. and the object is to do battle with

other ships in order to win favour with your superiors. The ship in question is a cutter with a crew of 50. Pressing any key place were ships question is a currer with a crew of 50. Pressing any key gives you a graphic view of the sea. If a ship is sighted you may engage her or run. Should you engage you are told the enemy's strength. If you win the encounter you may sink the ship or it may surrender, in which ease you win prize money. All in all a rather simple and underwarding camp with few. and undemanding game with few Idritte

# SMUGGLER'S GOVE

SMUBGLER'S GOVE

Producer: Quicksilva, 48K £6:95
It's 1763 and you are on a hunt for
Bleckbeard's famous treasure,
hidden in a complex of caves on the
north Cornish Coast. The program
burbles away at you in pirateese of
the 'Argh, Jim lad, me scupper, there,
e be, 'type. The top half of the
screen contains well designed and
instantly appearing location
graphics, but the game gets
nowhere, it seems impossible to get
beyond the first few locations and
then it ceases to be any fun,

# SPECTRUM SAFARI

Producer: A J Rushton, 46K £5.95
I've been told that this game is now marketed by C O S Micro Systems, but they haven't confirmed that yet, in any event it is a jolly and original mixture of areade bits with text/graphics adventure which should keep you on your toes unless you're a D&D purist. The idea is to

# **48K SPECTRUM**



You have been recruited by Dr Minestorm who has discovered a new form of energy...pink tar. Your task is to mine the tar...if you can't You drive the buildozer but warch out for the sreepy crewliss! A very exciting original arcade game which requires skill and luck. Defanitly a game for any arcade wizzerd.

- Rempston joystick or keyboard Bighly responsive machine code Creay areade action Great graphics and sound



in the March issue said:

- Requires lightning raffiches and mastery of techniques Otterly addictive Good value I'm sure this is going to appeal to a jot of thappy cade players

30p for postage and packing. All cassettes guaranteed dispatched within 24 hours.



59 BATEMAN ROAD EAST LEAKE LOUCHBOROUGH LE12 6NN



lake your perty of stranded explorers across an island infested with highly intelligent wildlife with university degrees, and beast with natives who want to barter away their food and men to replace that eaten by the men or the intelligent wildlife. Once you have visited a village it disappears forever, presumably wiped out through lack of resistance to some vite white man's disease, but it teaches you caution in your bargaining, if you're getting short of explorers (lives) in your party. Losing them all means ideath to the player. The main object is to find the only boat, buy it and sail away from this Magnus Magnusson madhouse. Every animal encountered has some problem for your sometimes its an arcade style situation, sometimes they went to know the answer to a difficult mathematical problem. If you fail a member of your party gets eaten. Vice clear graphics and a veritable MGM mustical score makes this a very enjoyable game. Recommended.

SUPER SPY

Producer: Richard Shepherd, 48K €6.50

Cross and recross the world in Cross and recross the world in search of Dr Death's secret island fair, Full of coded messages and puzzles, mysterious packages, waitresses, hotel managers, taxi cab drivers and the like. Be wary of parcels and flowers that explode and watch out for Dr Death's horrid little. watch out for of bealively and fun midget. It could be a lively and fun game to play, but in the end it settles for mere confusion which tends to wear the player down. If you like this type of game, probably worth it.

Producer: Midrogan, 48K 25.95
This is a game in which you must find the pieces of your craft which have been scattered throughout time owing to an accident in warp-space. Thorughout your quest you must defend yourself from the Inhabitants of that time, such as a bunch of Roman soldiers in 137 AD. The screen displays your attackers, weapons you may pick up, and the salvagable bits of your craft as well as yourself. To the right is a status table and below a series of lexit options which are activated by pressing the desired initial letter. These options allow you to move across the screen, choose the direction, and attack, pick up, change weapons and so on. The geme has very limited graphics and is neither accade nor really an adventure. It claims to be in real time (a clock ticks away with every move made) but as fits staged across eons of time this is scarcely possible. Poor. Overall CRASH rating 33%. BASIC.

# VALHALLA

Producer: Legend, 48K £14.95 (1) Valhatia is much too lengthy and complicated to go into in a brief

review. If coasts the best animated graphics in an adventure yet, numerous locations, lots and lots of Inter-reactive characters who carry on with or without you, and kill each other off all over the place. Interruptother off all over the place. Interruptoperated text input allows you to
type in commands while other
actions are taking place and the
program accepts quite compilicated
sentences. There are six separate
but linked quests, although much
fun may be had just living life as it
comes in Vaihalla. Accompanied by
an excellent book which tells you all
you need to know in no-nonsense
language. Expensive but worth it,
although there were mixed feelings
about the ultimate value of the
game's central objectives. Overall
CRASH rating 82%, M/C.

SMUGGLER

Producer: CCS, 48K £8.00

Author: P A Hainsworth
The inlay says that skill, inspiration and calculated risk are the main ingredients of success. Five levels of play allow you to move and store goods, buy goods, sell them, buy a boat, saillt, and consult the bank. Il is the 19th century and the object is to amass a fortune of £250,000 by smuggling goods in from the Mediterranean (avoiding Ships of the Line). Factors to juggle with include craw costs, commodity costs, port dues, maintenance costs, size of vessel and how far II can safely travel and at what loading. Random elements include the weather, which may sink your vessel or run it aground, and there are always the pristes to watch out for.

# TYRANT OF ATHENS

Producer: MC Lothlorien, 16K £5.50 Another text strategy game from Lothlorien, It's the lifth century BC and Athens is beset by hostile armies and fleets from other armies and fleets from other powerful Greek states as well as the Persians. All you have to do is survive long enough to furn Athens into the most teared state in the Mediterranean by building warships, training troops and flighting battles by sea and by land. No mention of democracy here, and philosophy's strictly for the cissies. Not one of their best games, but reasonably playable. playable

# WARLORD

Producer: MC Lothlorien, 48K £5.50 Producer: MC Lothlorien, 48K 25.50
This might be seen as a sequel to 
'Samurai Warrior' and the same period 
of time. You rule a small coastal 
village which supports itself by slave 
labour and by raiding other small 
villages. In turn your village may be 
raided by other villages or by the 
pirates off the coast. This is a 
considerably expanded game 
compared to 'Samurai Werrior'. 
Menu options allow you to train compared to samusal warrow.
Menu options allow you to train
troops from your villagers, set some
aside for land-cultivation, hire
mercenaries, attack pirates, raid
other villages, hire samural and build

Adventure games come in all shapes and sizes. They are text-oriented, although graphics are often added, sometimes for a pretty effect, sometimes as an integral part of the game with clues not in the laxt. There are also an increasing number of graphic adventures which combine the adventure format with arcade style graphics. They are all linked by the common theme of a quest, a search for some object or aim through many locations.

ABYSS

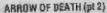
Producer: CCS, 48K £5,00
In a hidden gorge through the
Mountain of the Golden Lion, lies
the forgotten ABYSS, But brave and
toolhardy adventurers like you
sometimes strive to cross II, their
sole aim to destroy the many evil
monsters that lurk in the shadows,
waiting for the next meal to come
strolling across the many bridges in
the ABYSS, Scenario over, the game
begins. The screen presents you
with a yellow grid, each crossing
point being a "lurking" place.
Movement is done by the cursors
until you encounter a monster.
These tend to offer you a range of
problems, filke the Ogre who can't
get his sums right—can you in 15
seconds? Or the arcade sequence
where you must hit five falling
spiders before they reach the cave
floor, Added dangers are creaky
bridges that may collabpse under spiders before they reach the cave floor. Added dengers are creaky bridges that may collabpse under you. By no means a traditional D&D adventure, but certainly one for quick thinking swots with 'O' levels to pass! Good value for the price and not at all easy.

ARROW OF DEATH (pt 1)

ARROW OF DEATH (pt 1)

Producer: Digital Fentasia, 48K £9.95

Author: Brian Howarth
The follow up to Golden Beton, and the worshipped rod's famous glow has been stolen. It's your task to rescue it with the aid of a magical errow. Part 1 requires you to find the whereabours of the parts which make up the arrow. You start in a palace with a dead messenger in front of you who wears an amulet around his arm bearing the shape of a barge. The King's sorceror has been unable to vanguish the evit that has stolen the glow – how can you? One of the foughest assignments from the pen of Brian Howarth. Overall CRASH rating 68%.



ARROW OF DEATH (pt 2)
Producer: Digital Fentasia, 48K £9.95
Author: Brian Howarth
Having collected the various bits of the
magical arrow you find yourself on the
fringes of the Marsh of Desolation,
seeking the one men who is able to
create the arrow whole, Amild, the royal
flatcher. With the arrow, you will then
be able to undertake the defect of the
evil Xerdon, the monster who has
stolen the Golden Batton's glow,
Unfortunately, Xerdon's minions have
kidnapped Ardid, Problems all the way
of course. Overall CRASH rating 69%.

### BLACK CRYSTAL

BLACK CRYSTAL

Producer: Carnett, 48K £7.50

A mammoth undertaking and one of the earliest big adventures. It features graphics filling most of the screen, showing a map of the various landscapes. Choose what character you want to be and then wade in to fight the monsters. Far too complex to do justice to in this space, but if you are to play it set aside hours for contemplation of the book (or novel one might say) which explains everything. Indeed, you are recommended to save the game at various stages and think over the day's events before plunging in.

Recommended.

Producer: CCS, 48K £5.00(1)
Author: CSS Ben-Ami
This is a text-with-some-graphics adventure, where the battle field is the depths of a 3D maze in which various computer components must be located to build your own computer. They may be lying about, they may be hidden and generally they are defended by all sorts of electronic monsters you must defeat to remain alive and progress. The seven skill levels are neatly categorised by the sophistication of the computer you want to build, each having its own strength characteristics. Battles with the monsters may take the form of mental bouts like spelling lests or maths questions, or they may be physical where, for instance, you may have to do semi-arcade battles with cross bows or swords. Graphically the text is pretty clear, but the Inputting of commands is rather irritating and there's too much reverse tlashing going on which tires the eye. Medium tast response times. Overall CRASH rating 58%, average. BASIC.

dis me oth req

CAMELOT CCS. 48K £5.00 Author: C Chapman & G Brooks

CCS, 48K £5.00
Author: C Chapman & G Brooks
You are Arthur Pendragon, banished
from Camelot by the wicked Black
Knight, but an unknown ally has
loaned you 50 bags of gold pleces.
You must travet around and collect
seven items that are hidden in
various countries. Three bassars
exist where you may buy items to
help you, and there are other items
hidden that may help you overcome
problems. The object is to collect the
seven items and re-unter Camelot to
be crowned King. This is a graphics
adventure where you move Arthur
and his band of warriors around a
map by using keys N.S.E.W. At each
step the scene cuts to a graphic
representing castles, Iowns and
different types of landscape, in each
there is some problem to overcome,
like a band of brigands whom you
may fight or flee. Battle strength and
helpful objects elready collected
help determine the outdome. Should
you win there is a search option for
more useful items. The graphics are

bright and clear, response times are fairly good and this unconventinal adventure might well make an attractive change from the usual.

#### CASTLE BLACKSTAR

Producer: SCR Adventures, 48K £8.95

(3) Author: Sheppard, Cummins & Richardson

Richardson'
A text-only adventure, and first of a planned series of Artemis Quests. The Goddese Artemis, glimpsed in a dream, bits you enter Castle Blackstar to recover her power orb from the vast underground deverse. To achieve maximum points all treasures found must be cleaned of their avid all. must be cleaned of their evil, all puzzles solved and the orb returned becation descriptions are detailed and atmospheric and response times are machine code fast with a touch of machine code last with a touch of humour. The development of cause and effect is pretty advanced with studions like the turning of a which in one room, causing the relising of a chandelier in another far away. Perhaps the only drawback is the rether steep price in comparison to many other similar adventures, so a text retire or waite the recovery. The low rating on value for money, but overall a CRASH rating of 75%.

#### CASTLE COLDITY

Producer: K-Tel, 48K £6.95 (3)
On the same casette comes Battle of the Toothpaste Tubes, an arcade game of reasonable quality, and just as well as the adventure based on escaping from the famous World War It German prison camp is pathetic.
Location descriptions are sparse and uninteresting, the logic of where you can go and what you may find is daft. A total waste of time and money. CRASH rating - below 20%.

#### CIACUS

Producer: Digital Fentasia, 48K E9.95 Author: Brian Howarth Digital Fantasia specialise in marketing adventure games, a unique feature of which is that you may have the graphics switched on or off. Things graphics switched on or off. Things move faster with them off, especially as the Hi-res drawings do take a bit of time to appear. On the other hand, there are often clues in the graphics which aren't apparent in the text. Oricus is number 6 in the series, and starts off when your car runs out of petrol in the middle of nowhers. You search live believe in fort and come. patrol in the middle of nowhere. You search for help on foot and come across a noisy circus, apparently in full swing, miles from anywhere. As you enter the jobly place, all the sound and lights die. The big top is a graveyerd of evil spirits. It's nice to stumble across a generator, as wandering around the darkness inside the tent can prove falst. But robbing its entered to the falst. But robbing its entered to the falst and the problem is so elimble. The fatal. But nothing is so simple – the generator won't work without a cable generator won I work without a capia plugged in to leed the lights. Clowns 
leave messages, lightrope walking 
requires a safety net, can you be a 
human cannonball? An addictive game 
which requires a good memory and 
plenty of ingenuity. Overall CHASH 
rating 75%, machine code.

#### **CLASSIC ADVENTURE**

Producer: Melbourne House, 48K £5.95 Author: John Jones-Steele

Author: John Jones-Steele
Also known as Adventure 1 by
Abersoft, who originally marketed this
adventure through CP Software under
the title of Golossal Caves, Classic
Adventure was originally written in the
70s in Fortran and took up over 200K
of memory. As the name suggests, this
Is the epitome of traditional D & D
adventures. You must find a treasure
of unteld riches by penetrating a deadly
complex of caverns. When the game
starts you are standing by a brick
building which must be entered, and
where you will find a number of objects
to help you in your quest. Then the
entry to the caverns must be
discovered. On your travels you will
meet giant snakes, trolls, dragons and
other wierd creatures. Although
requiring some careful thought, must of
the puzzlas presented are easily the puzzles presented are easily

overcome. A last moving and enjoyable adventure.

#### **COLOSSAL ADVENTURE**

Producer: Level 9 Computing, 48K £9.90

E9.90
Discover the litteen hidden treasures, rescue two groups of captured elves and then try to find the cave exit through a massive complex of passages, tunnels and rooms. During this major quest you will have to kill many wandering dwarves with your axe, get a knife thrown at you, stumble across the elves' crown jewels and make sure that the batteries of your light don't not entitled. light don't run out. Coins from one of the treasures may be used in a vending machine for more batteries, otherwise it's the pits! Watch out for those pits in the dark! Like other Level 9 the darkt Like other Level 9 adventures, this one is all text and very large. Locations are magically described and the keyboard responses are good. You are only allowed to carry lour objects at a time, so much time and battery life is wasted transporting useful items from place to placo, dropping them and then going back for them when they are needed.

Recommended.

#### COLOSSAL CAVES

Producer: C P Software, 48K £7,95 Author: Abersoft Author: Appropriate 1 by Abersoft, this is a traditional style adventure where you must find the treasure left behind by a Wizard, and in which you will meet dragons, troits, snakes and other dark denizens. When the program has finished loading the adventure finished loading the adventure begins instantly without instructions. These are available on command. The game is strictly text only and uses repeal localions when travelling along, say, a valley. Finding the cave in the first place is aiready an adventure in itself, and the whole game may take days, even weeks to complete satisfactorily. One of the classic computer adventure games. Recommended.

## DENIS THROUGH THE DRINKING GLASS

DENIS THROUGH THE DRINKING CLASS

Producer: Applications, 48K £5.50 (3) If mythical dragons have become the bane of you life, try pitting you wits against a real monster in this compelling, witty and difficult game. You must guide Denis Thatcher through life, avoiding line ity blast of Maggie as she prepares another Prime Ministerial speech at Number 10. Denis just wants to got out to his favourite pub, the Gravediggers Arms, but Maggie's in the way and Denis has a severe drinking problem—if he doesn't get a slug of gin within 10 moves, he's as good as dead. Location descriptions are all rendered in rhyme and tend to offer a jauncticed view of political life. Early attempts at escape may well end up with you photographed on the bront doorstep of Number 10 nude—did you lorget to get dressed Flinding the gin is a tough assignment end the HELP facility only tends to be helpfully rude. A prompt of BALLS! turns out to refer to the golf balls which you have forgotten, and "Get Knotted" suggests that sheets may make a rope. You're not likely to get bored, but there's always a votume of Knopotkin's Memoirs to white away a lew seconds between dying for a lack of gin. Very fast responses with this Curili-writer game, and highly recommended. Overall CRASH rating Quili-written game, and highly recommended. Overall CRASH rating B3%, machine code.

#### DEVILS OF THE DEEP

Producer: Richard Shepherd, 48K

ASO graphic adventure where you move your undersea diver along the sea bed avoiding electric sels and crabs, collect useful items like harpoon guns and harpoons, knives and compasses, and try to collect the treasure hidden somewhere. There are 100 screens to be traversed. The idea is a good one but



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se prachics are uninspiring and very, very slow. Long load and minutes to wait if you are killed before another game may be played. Below average.

#### DODGE CITY

Producer: Phoenix, 48K £9.99 Author: Fraser Orr For adventurers, the problem with this game is that to load the adventure you must first win through 12 levels of an arcade game where baddies chase your pony express rider. Completing the 12 levels results in a running code for the adventure as well as some vital clues. Your task is to prove you innocence of the murder of the deputy Innocence of the murder of the deputy sheriff who has been found dead in your hole! room with you holding the gun that did it. It is an option menu graphic adventure with each situation offering two or three choices of action. Overall CRASH rating of 57%, machine code.

#### DUNGEONS OF DOOM

Producer: Temptation, 48K £5.95 This is meant to contain two games -either you enter and progress down through the dungeons, or you start at the bottom and try to get out. stan a the bottom and by to get out the lithought that It was generally the case with any adventure. It's meant to be a graphic adventure, but the graphics ar restricted to black on green squares representing the room you are in and the ones near to it. Monsters appear in text only and seem dispiritingly easy to kill off. Slow responses and few thrills make this a beginners-only introduction

#### **ESPIONAGE ISLAND**

Producer: Artic, 48K £6.95 Artic have produced five text only adventures to date, lettered A to E This is 'D'. Despite or because of, the lack of pictures, all their adventures are dripping with verbal atmosphere.

They contain endless locations They contain endless locations, options, puzzles to solve and are never afraid of the most obscure or most obvious of solutions. Always excellent value, in this game you are on a reconnaissance flight to spy on an enemy island when you are hit by fire. The adventure begins in the light of the puzzle of the puzzle of the puzzle. by the, The avertaire signs in the plane as it plunges earthwards. There are many tangles with the parachute before you reach the ground — just grabbing it and opening the fuselage door results in a nasty red mess on the ground! From there on you must make your way to the heart of the enemy stronghold, secure information, and return to your aircraft carrier in disgulse, avoiding being shot by your own side. Biggles lives again! Clear writing and last responses combined with a variable element in replay, make this a very worthwhile buy. Save game feature.

#### FAUST'S FOLLY

Producer: Abbex, 16K £5.95 Faust's Folly is buried somewhere in this congenial game with fast response times and some graphic additions. Once you have sorted out the vocab and found the entrance to the underground complex, it's a matter of the correct implements being picked up. The computer tells you that it isn't very intelligent (whatever Sinclair may tell you) and if may not know which way is which without a compass to help. In almost any tocation you can go in eight directions, so don't get tost, Very good for 16K.

#### **GHOST TOWN**

Producer: Virgin Games, 48K £5.95
Author: John Pickford
Ghost Town is a pretty accurate
copy of Phipps Associates' 'Greedy
Gulch', but it's nowhere hear as
much lun. There's the same did empty town with e sequential map showing the locations of the various establishments where useful items and information may be found to help you locate the gold mine in the desert. Once in the desert there desent, Once in the desent mere don't seem to be any graphics worth speaking of. At least the lext is nicely written and the response times are very good. But if I had to choose It would be 'Greedy Guich'. Overall CRASH rating 43%. BASIC.

#### **GOLDEN APPLE**

Producer: Artic, 48K 06.95 Author: Simon Wadsworth Adventure 'E' is The latest from Artic and its fille card explains this text only adventure very well—a large mansion, a ship and a mountainous island in the distance. Looks easy until you start. The object is to find 13 secret objects, find a safe place to store them in and do this through tons of locations. Finding a key can be hard enough, but the key you need near the start of this game is head heat the start of this game, hidden in a very obvious place — so obvious you would never think off looking there until you sneezed after shifting the — no I mush't give any secrets away. Absorbing!

#### GOLDEN BATON

Producer: Digital Fantasia, 48K £9.95 Author: Brian Howarth The object of the title of this excellent advanture has been slaten from the palece where tis normally kept. As it is a priceless artifact which has been worshipped by your race for years, you are sent out to find it. The game begins are sent out to find it. The game begins in a dense, spooky wood and you are standing next to a tattered clock and a pile of rotting leaves. During the quest you will encounter a woll, a carvivorous crab, a lizard man and the Gorgon among many other certe nestices. The ingenuity with which Brian Howarth spins both plot and logic keeps you on the edge of your seat. The graphics are somewhat simple, but the strength of these games lies in their text. Three sequels follow on from The Golden Baton: Arrow of Death (parts 1 and 2) and The Wizard of Akyrz, CHASH rating 68%.

#### GREEDY GULCH

Producer: Phipps Associates, 48K £4.35

The town of the title is a ghost town set in the Wild West, deserted now the gold workings have run out. But there is a mine out in the there is a mine out in the neighbouring desert which still has a fortune tucked away. The problem is to find the right map, get something to carry water in and till it, lind a gun for protection and then get to the mine and back. Whilst not a massively demanding adventure, it's cottains on absorbing one. The certainly an absorbing one. The graphics show you the map of Greedy Guich Itself, or parts of it, with some location graphics in the desert. There are several mysterious appearances by someone you only see out of the corner of your eye. Some problems are simpler to overcome then you might suppose —confronted by a crevass and darrying a plank which wouldn's bridge it, jumping across solved the problemi Good value.

#### SECUCHO

BROUCHO
Producer: Automala, 84 K £10.00 (1)
Author: Piman
Tha full lifte of this dilty is, "My Name
is Uncie Groucho You Win A Fat
Cigar," but that's much to long to
ever repeat again Like their famous
Pimania, the object is to wade
through a drug-induced landscape
of weirdness and insanity, which is
supposed to represent America, in
the company of Groucho Marx and
his companion the Piman, discover
the secret identity of a famous
Hollywood star which is hidden in
the game, and then win the fabulous
prize of a frip to Hollywood to meet
the star in question, flying out on
Concorde and coming back on the Concorde and coming back on the QE2. A rags to riches story for someone. Entries before 1 June. someone. Entires beginn a fathe.
Naturally, you've got to be solld
bonkers to get it right, and a
pimaniac to boot. Good fun despita
the slow response times. Excellent
graphics and sound. Overall CRASH
rating 87%. BASIC.

#### HOBBIT

Producer: Melbourne House, 48K £14.95 To date the great adventure, based on the famous Tolkien novel of the same name, which is included for the price. This game has a largish vocabulary and allows sentence with link words. Artificial intelligence of a kind entivens the action as the characters continue their lives regardless of what you do it's possible to inter-relate with them to some degree, depending on their some degree, depending on their feelings towards you. Some even get killed without you knowing about it until you stumble across their bodies! I've forgotten what the quest is, but it's hardly important—playing the game is Very long and totally absorbing. A classic.

#### HUMMER HOUSE OF HORROR

Producer: Lasersound, 48K £7.00 Clouds obscure the moon and you are alone in the dreadful house — or are you? No you are not alone, there's the mad Chinese cook in the greasy kitchen for a start off, plus imps, ghouls and things that go bump in the night. Every room is seathing with something or someone who wants you to pass something on to someone or something. Simple 30 graphics try to enliven the rather ponderous pace. Average fun.

#### INCA CURSE

Producer: Artic, 48K £8.95
This is adventure 'B', well up to Artic's usual standard of text only games, You are in the South American jungle, near an, as yet, undisturbed inca Temple, Inside there is a lot of freasure which you must find and bring safely out. Being an Indiana Jones may be of some help, but pitting your brains against the evils therein is more important. Recommended

#### INVINCIBLE ISLAND

Producer: Richard Shepherd, 48K £6.50

Author: P Cooke Invincible Island is the home of the Invincible Island Is the home-of the primitive Xaro tribe. Legend has it (as they often will) that the Xaro quard unimaginable treasures. Your only help is the tast message of world famous explorer Dr Chumtey who said, 'First find the seven parchments of Xaro'. He was never heard from again. Now it's your turn. Programs from this company always seem to take an age to load. When it has you are presented with a nice has you are presented with a nice clear text and neat location graphics. Reasonably fast responses

#### THE ISLAND

THE ISLAND

Producer: Virgin Games, 48K r5, 95

Author: Martyn Davies

Apparently you live in a clutch of South Sea Islands, one of which contains gold. Find the map, find the correct island and get rich quick. A mostly text adventure with arcade sequences to add to the fun—that's the Idea—the reality is something else. It's had one good review we've seen, but goodness knows why! This sen't a real adventure at all in the proper sense. You're led by the nose along the correct guessing path until you end up with an impossible arcade sequence which demands you sail your ship through a rock-infested sea. Deviation from the author's intended path results in terminaling the game. Excellent response tiems to nowhere. Sorry, it's rubbish, Overall CRASH rating below 20%, M/C.

#### KNIGHT'S QUEST

KNIGHT'S QUEST 
Producer: Phipps Associates, 48K
65.95
Which Micro's reviewers got very angry about this game, because it is written in BASIC. Lots of adventure games are written in BASIC and are very good. If a little slow at limes. The plot of Knight's Quest is a little thin and unoriginal however, a forerunner of their much better games. Some locations are simply illustrated with small graphics and there are the usual assortment of spells, weapons and monsters. Not all bad by any means.

#### LORDS OF TIME

Producer: Level 9 Computing, 48K £9.90 (3)

Producer: Level 9 Computing, 48K 29.90 (3)
A band of evil Time Lords are plotting to siter the history of the world. You must travel back in time and collect raise crucial objects, each marked with the symbol of the hourglass, which, when they are put into a caudinon will be used to defeat the Time Lords. The game starts in your own thring room and brough a run down grandfather clock. The cogs inside are the key for traveiling through to the many time zones—back to confront angry cave people—forward, where you may get ost among the stars. Once the nine objects have been located in whetever time zone they may be in, the caudinon must be found. The lext creates a remarkable atmosphere with life-like descriptions, includes a useful booklet of instructions and objectives. A brilliant adventure and highly recommended for a few weeks hard work.

#### MAD MARTHA

Producer: Mikrogen: 48K E8.95
To prove how much fun a BASIC written adventure can be try this little comestic ditty. As hen-pecked husband, Henry, steal your wife's money, creep out of the house without waking haby of triples and without waking haby of triples. money, creep out of the house without waking baby or tripping over the waiking moggy, and have a niight out on the town at the casino and other similarly Unsavoury Places. The problem is that your wife, dear Martha, is an escape from Finday the 13th Part Six 4D, a homicidal maniac with an axel Good vocabulary and an invariable program that resembles a word maze. Getting things in absolutely the correct order is the name of the game here. But if you are too clever there are very tricky little arcade sequences included. To puriets these may be upsetting, but they do liver up the adventure. If you have tiled Mad Martha and enjoyed if then lify ...

#### II AHTRAM DAM

MAD MARTHA II

Producer: Mikrogen, 48K £6.95

Much The same mix as before,
except this time Henry, Martha and
son are on holiday in Spain, Martha
has a helf-cousin, a weiter called
(weit for it) Manuel, Martha sets out
on a bus tour with her son, leaving
Manuel to keep an eye on Henry,
who has a secret rendezvous with a
Spanish penpal. Henry leaves their
hotel with Manuel hot on his trail.
Features a buil fight with Henry as a
the star attraction. Not to be missed

#### MAGIC MOUNTAIN

Producer: Phipps Associates, 48K C4.95

Seek out the Scroll of Wisdom In this seek out the Scroll of Wisdom in this text adventure with location graphics. There is the usual assortment of items and monsters, balfling puzzles and sudden deaths through Inexperience. Reasonable graphics and medium last response times. An average effort.

#### MINES OF SATURN

Producer: Mikrogen, 16K 25,95 includes part two — Return to Earth. You're making a routine cribit of Saturn when a radiation storm forces you to crash land on one of the moons. Luckily you come down near an abandoned mining base. Now you must set off in search of Di-Lithium crystals to refuel your standard ship. 'Return to Earth' gets you back in space and landing on an abandoned and damaged space station, tooking for a means of communicating with Earth. Both adventures are very standard, with not many locations and irritating random elements over which you have no control. The games lack atmosphere and will not accept abbreviations making you type everything out. Tedious. abbreviations making you type averything out. Tedious.



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- 4. Is there really such a pub in Plymouth?
- 5. What made Woy dizzy?
- 6. Is he a quarter pounder?
- 7. A hole in one or one in a hole?
- 8. Where did he learn to talk like that?
- 9. Has he gone off his Malvinas?
- 10. Who is it dummy?

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MINES OF MORIA

MINES OF MORIA
Producer: Severn, 16K £4.95
The Mines of Moria are the ancient home of Duthi's folk from Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. Long deserted, the mines contain old hoards of jewels and gold, guarded by the ancient end well terrors of earlier ages. You're inside — the problem is getting out alive. Monsters include Trolts, Orcs, Balrogs or Wargs. Doors can be opened by force, spells or bribery of the door wards. Spells on be bargained for from witards, and traders sell you wound ointment. Control is by the cursor keys, you can go up and down or use a warp which transports to other locations on a rendom floor. Watch out for the two-part load. The game itself is a mix. The screen shows you a plan of the floor with a list which lets you know the level you are on and room number occupied, weaponry and armorial status, number of wounds, strength, gold collected, jewels collected and spells available. A line at the bottom informs you of what's going on and asks whether or not to fight on meeting monsters. Rooms visited are plotted on the map, showing monsters encountered. It becomes difficult to manoeuvre after a while. A reasonable game. Producer: Severn, 16K £4.95 difficult to manoeuvre after a white. A reasonable game.

MOUNTAINS OF KET

Producer: Incentive, 48K £5.50 (2)
This is part one of the 'Ket Trilogy'.
Each part is a separate adventure in lise!. Two weeks ago you were framed for murder and sentenced to death ion murger and sentenced to death unless you undertook a dangerous mission – locate the secret entrance which fies at the base of the Mountains of Ket and which will let you reach the far side of the mountains. Many have tried and none returned. The computer

takes the part of Edgar, an assassin bug which has been implanted in your neck to ensure your loyalty. The game starts on the edge of a village, sortie way from the mountains, where you may be able to collect some of the implements which will help ensure your survival, weapons, a horse and some food. Not much shoney he been provided you, so the first adventuring tasks are discovering ways of getting the stoid villagers to part with the things you need. This is a text-only game in which any battless are described blow-by-blow, with your choice to break off it isn't going well instant response times, excellent descriptions and a sense of humour make this a very entertaining adventure with an overall CRASH relingof 73%, machine code.

THE GRACLE'S CAVE

Producer' DORIC, 48K £7.95 (1)

Author: Chris Dorrell

Using the classic D&D format, this is an animated graphics adventure.

You must seek the entrance to the caves in which you are trapped, collecting 40 units of treasure on your way. You must also collect treasure guarded by four special moneters, The Mummy. The Centeur, The Flery Dragon or The Black Knight. With each game the layout of the caves is rendomly generated to make each play different from the last. Commands are entered in resonse to a menu of limited options which allow you to move, rest, explore, use (a carried article) or, If in the presence of a monster, fight or run. If you efect to move the menu is replaced by THE ORACLE'S CAVE move the menu is replaced by another offering laft/right/up/down. When 'you' move there is an animation sequence which is very well done, expecially the descent of stairs. The fights are fun, but you must watch your combat strength and that of your opponent very carefully. Another point is to use the explore facility all the while. The game grows on you as you begin to

realise its potential. Reasonable response limes, good graphics and good value for money. Overall CRASH rating 70%, BASIC.

#### PHARAOR'S TOMB

Producer: Phipps Associates: 48K

Producer: Phipps Associates: 48K 64.95
Make yourself rich by plundering a fuxurious Pharaoh's tomb. Phipps have put together a well planned and sometimes amusing adventure game here, with text and tocation graphics, which are simply but attractive. Responses are very fest and the atmosphere draws you in again and again. Good value for money and well worth playing.

#### PEMANIA

PIMANIA
Producer: Automats, 48K £10.00
There's not much to be said about
Pimania, the game that launched
overnight the insignificant Pi Man to
fame and fortune. The game is
wacky, daft, weird and infuriating by
turns and to date the famous prize
worth £6,000 (plus index linking) has
not been won. Although it runs on
standard adventure game links in
takes lateral thinking into the realms takes lateral thinking into the realms of higher (or perhaps camp) art. Slow responses but that hardly matters, Primaria is a disease which overcomes most things!

#### PLANET OF BEATH

PLANE. OF BEATH
Producer: Artic, 16K IB: 95
Adventure 'A' fings you stranded on
an alien planet and you must find
your space ship. That's a pretty
strelightforward quest for once, but
the route is far from straightforward.
Atmospheric and chilling to play,
you get drawn in by the words.
Plenty of hazards to overcome.
Good value.

Producer: Hewson, 48K £5.95 Find a map hidden in a world Inhabited by gruesome monsters guarding their territory and various pieces of treasure. To undertake the permanently.



#### SAS ASSAULT

Producer: Mikrogen, 48K £8,95
In this text and some graphics adventure you are teading an SAS team who must recover the Russian Ambasador from kidnappers before the Russians take the matter as an act of war. The Russian is being held in a farmhouse and hart one is the act of war. The Bussian is being held in a farmhouse and partione is the assault. Part two, on the reverse side of the tape, carries the action forward with your ratings dependent upon how well you did in part one. If all moves along at a fair pace, with text descriptions and prompts as to the wearons your sarry and how. text descriptions and prompts as to the weapons you carry and how many bursts you can lire. When a situation develops you are given lettered choices like 'Go back' or 'Fire' or 'Wait'. In between there are line drawlings and some maps but most of the action is reported by the computer along the 'You hit one and killed him,' lines. Pretty fast responses, a lively story and generally not bad value. Overall CRASH rating 58% M/C.

#### SHIP OF DOOM

Producer: Artic, 48K £5.95 Adventure C takes you into space and on a reconnaissance trip your and on a reconnaissance trip your ship is drawn by a Graviton beam onto an alien cruiser. Fred, your pet android, informs you that the cruiser is in search of humanoid planets to capture slaves whose brains will be replaced by microchips. The quest to find the computer room and press the button to switch it off. You want to be wary in an Artic adventure, however, of switching off too many computers should you come across them. In 'Planet of Death' there is a computer which you may be computer which you may be tempted to disconnect. Doing so will dump you into a Sinclair Research



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#### TEN LITTLE INDIANS

Producer: Digital Fantasia, 48K £9.95
Author: Brian Howarth
The object of the game is to collect all
ten title indians, which are figurines
amounting to a fantastic fortune. It
starts unconventionally amough inside
a train cartiage with on annarent way. amounting to a fantastic fortune. It starts unconventionally enough inside a train carriage with no apparent way out, especially as you can see the countryside whizzing past the windows. After a certain number of goes the train crashes! Getting the train to stop takes some experimenting, but when it does, it pulls up at the station of Lower Massington, which turns out to be another problem, in as much as the game reality gots going in Upper Massington, in the manor house which belonged to the lata Major Johnston-Smythel Here the labulous gold figurine is hidden, but so are ten identical ones made from worthless metals which will guide you to the fortune hunters have hed a go and never bean head from again. Usual onloff text/graphics facility of Digital Fantasia games, and a convoluted plot worthy of Agatha Christie in this highly recommended adventure.

#### TIME MACHINE

Producer: Digital Fentasia, 48K £9.95
Author: Brian Howarth
In an adventure that could have been
written by H.G. Wells, you take the part
of a local news reporter for the
Tulkingham & Dunsby Gazette – hardly
a thrilling job until strange goings-on
are reported anound the old house on
the moors which belongs to an
accentric sciential by the name of
Potter. The game starts in a dense
toggy moor as you search for the old

house itself. It is easy to die in a bog before finally finding the house where the real adventure gets under way. You may eventually get to several destinations in time and space to locate prisms and resoule the time machine's owner. Objects collected in one dimension may well be needed in another, so it all takes a lot of working but. Bad tandurage results in the out. But language results in the admonishment to week your mouth out Excellent, almospheric descriptions and a graphics on/off facility. Overall CRASH rating 65%

#### **URBAN UPSTART**

Producer: Richard Shepherd, 48K £6.50 (3) Scarthorpe is the sort of town where even the dogs carry flick-knives, where there's only one road in, and it's a one way street. This text and graphics adventure is set in today's urban sprawl with unemployment opportunities, uncaring septic hospitals and sceptic police stations where arrest for obscenity is common. Football hooligans haunt the dirty streets and rate aren't all you'll find in Cut Throat Alley. The responses are reasonable, not super last, and the graphics which add little to the content of the adventure but a lot to the Scarthorpe is the sort of Lown where pervading atmosphere; are rather slow to build up. General rating, abovo average, overall CRASH rating 64%.

#### **VAMPIRE VILLAGE**

VAMPINE VILLAGE
Producer: Terminal, 48K £8.95 (1)
This graphics adventure is ac graphics-oriented there is hardly any text to contend with. The village of Vlasdorf lives under the shadow of the vampire's castle, and as Mayor of the village you must find volunteers, provide them with money to buy equipment and lood, and get them to help you destroy the vampire. eguipment and roots, late yet ment to help you destroy the vampire menade. Usual vampire rules apply—stakes through the heart, no flying by day, garlic keepe him at bay. The screen displays a map of Vlasdorf and the surrounding Viasdorf and the surrounding countryside with hosts of black chapes for buildings. You control your volunteer by the cursor keys—he's a small black dot—and you can send him to shops to buy things (like garlio), the boat house for a boat to cross the river (they drown if they fall in), the church for holy water, and so on. The village operates in real time moving from day to night with the usual rapidity of all good horror filmst An unusual game with many other loatures and reasonable value for money. Overall CRASH rating 64%, M/C.

#### VELNOR'S LAIR

PELIUR S LAM
Producer: Quickstiva, 48K £6.95
Author: Derek Brewster
No adventure anthology would be complete without this one. Text only, but fluid, copious text with fast response times and a sense of numour that takes some of the sting term the corrections take of the sting. numour that takes some of the sting from the gruesome tale of terror which turks within the complex of Velnor's Lair. There's a clever use of repeat locations which makes you think you aren't getting anywhere, when in fact you must keep entering the same command for five or six steps. The denizens of this steps. The denizeris of this adventure are a monstrous lot, and the goblins are tricky indeed. Chose your character carefully, wizard, warrior or priest, and warto out for litusions, which abound. Highly

# recommended.

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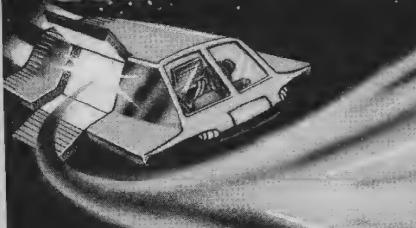
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### Orion

Producer: Software Projects Memory required: 48K Retail price; £5.95 Language: machine code Author: lan Beynon

After an attack by the Dark Horde, 100 of your Beta Class androids were kidnapped. Your mission is to rescue the androids from the underground maze beneath the

THE PROPERTY OF

and a taller status panel on the right which shows score, hiscore, time and shield power. Each of the mazes is relatively simple in layout and there are four Zygons and four Renlims to cope with. When you run over a Renlim, only the small squares at each intersection remain (your scanners are deactivated), so it becomes hard to make your way round the maze to collect the next androld. When you leave a maze the screen flashes, closes down, then opens up to reveal the new maze into which you have moved, re-

maze the screen flashes, closes down, then opens up to reveal the new maze into which you have moved, re-

Green Zygons and white Rentlim tall before the power of you WX110 force field – may you wash whiter than white.

palace of Nedab, the leader of the Horde. Twenty-five caverns are laid out on a 5 x 5 grid. Starting from the central cavern, you must journey through all of them collecting your androids. There are four imprisoned androids per cavern.

Green Zygon guards are on patrol in the mazes, Although these only wander around aimlessly, they kill on contact. Your Orion buggy is equipped with WX110 force screens (the ones with the whiter-than-white green specs) which, when activated, enable you to destroy Zygons. There are also white coloured Renlim (for faster acting relief) and these can be run over for extra points, but your scanners will become deactivated until you collect another android.

This puts it fairly simply, but should you run over a second Rentim before collecting an android, you will be destroyed, and your force field needs replenishing after use. This happens automatically but it does take time, so repeated contact with Zygons will result in death.

The screen is split into a large playing square to the left

establishing the scanners if they were still out.

#### CRITICISM

Fortunately your force field is ever recharging, so it pays to keep an eye on the status board, because it is drained very quickly too. There are four movement speeds which can be altered actually during play to give you bursts of speed, but, of course, everything else speeds up loo. A good addictive game with plenty going on. The alters are very nicely drawn and colours have been used well. The sound has also been well used to give maximum enjoyment without the expense of a headache!"

Maze games seem to remain popular with programmers, and it is becoming harder to find something new to do with them. Orion actually resembles a Berserk' game in some respects, but the graphics lift it far above those humble beginnings. This is a very simple idea – go in and rescue your androids, but it manages to be playable and quite addictive. The graphics are detailed and reasonably

smooth and I enjoyed playing it."

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, B=force field Joystick: Kempston, Hardware Projects Soundstik Keyboard play: very responsive Use of cofour: very good Graphics: smooth, fast and detailed Sound: very good Skill levels: 1 but 4 speeds Lives: 3 Screens: 25 General rating: very good, addictive.

Use of computer	68%
Graphics	78%
Playability	81%
Getting started	72%
Addictive qualities	82%
Value for money	76%
Overall	76%

# Space Station Zebra

Producer: Beyond Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5,95 Language: BASIC and machine code Author: Pat Norris

Space Station Zebra, apart from being a good name for a science fiction movie, is, as is name suggests, a space station. It is situated at the farthest

outpost of the galaxy, spinning quite happily until the aliens come. Now the energy reserves are low, only one lazgun remains operative, and you are the sole remaining survivor.

The screen display is seen as if from a control tower of the ring-shaped space station, with the outer rim just visible at the bottom, Beyond that are the outer reaches of space, filled with stars. Below the viewscreen there is a radar, a thrust indicator, and an energy level The radar screen indicator. shows the the station unfolded and aliens will appear on the screen. The lazgun only works when there is sufficient energy. The sights are two fine markers top and bottom and left and right of the view screen. When the game starts the station is rotating and the aliens will try to attack the blind side. The spin must be halted before the lazgun can be used, so the radar is employed to bring an alien round to the front.

The alien craft appear, with a partial 3D effect, to attack the station. Your station's shields will only survive seven hits, but are replenished with every completed phase. There are three phases with meaner aliens each time.

#### CRITICISM

'The aliens come towards you in a poor 3D effect. Each move you make uses up energy, with recharges if no keys are pressed. When you press the thruster direction to start the station spinning again, the thrusters always come at full power. I didn't like the way this happens, totally unrealific. The game has no real content and laser control is difficult without any cross hairs. No original

Good graphics put to poor use on the fringes of known space. Space Station Zebra.:



ideas have gone Into this game at all. Terrible.

'The graphics are very good looking with smoothly scrolling star screen, so it seems a shame that the game itself doesn't really live up to them. A serious problem is the laser sight. The small markers at the extreme edges of the view screen are hard to see anyway, but when you are staring in the centre of the screen as an alien comes towards you, they cannot be seen at all, which seems entirely pointless and makes the game unplayable

The game idea is quite simple - shoot aliens as they attack you in a very poor look-ing 3D with your laser which can't move fast enough to cope with them unless you are a clairvoyant and have it aimed right at the place where the alien appears. Good looking graphics, though poor 3D but a rather unplayable and uninteresting game.

#### COMMENTS

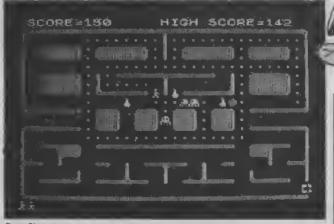
Controls keys: 0 and 1 step/start rotation, M=fire, O/A up/down on sights Joystick: none Keyboard play: reasonable, but slow on the movement of Use of colour: good Graphics: smooth and effective, but poor 3D Sound: fair Skill levels: 3 progressive Lives: 1, shields take 7 hits General rating: waste of толеу.

Use of computer	40%
Graphics	60%
Playability	20%
Getting started	63%
Addictive qualities	10%
Value for money	15%
Overall	35%

## **Potty Planter**

Producer: Mogul Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.50 Author: Michael Welbourne

Potty Planter is a mirror image 'Pacman' game, which is to say, you must guide your man about a series of mazes, dropping dots on the way, while ghosts chase you. Instead of



Potty Planter turns out to be a Nameap.

four power pills and several ghosts, there are many such brown 'pills' dotted about and only two ghosts. As soon as you eat a ghost, another appears. The pills are only effective for a few seconds or for one ghost, which ever is the sooner. Bonus fruit lie all over. There is a wrap around tunnel horizontally, and an exit gate at the bottom right-hand corner which must be reached when the last dot has been laid. Occasionally a bird tries to eat your dats.

#### CRITICISM

Once the maze has been covered by dots you make your exit through a door and into a different maze. If the bird tries to eat your dots the only way to prevent it is to eat it, YUK! The maze is drawn very well but characters such as ghosts and yourself are not. Also the movements are written in BASIC, which makes everything a bit sluggish, and it can take as long as five minutes to complete a maze. I can't really recommend this game, though if you like arcade games and have slow reactions it might suit you."

The graphics are small and jerky. Some form of data corruption must have occurred on loading because the shapes of the moving characters did not seem right: a mess in fact. A fair to average arcade game."

'It took an astonishingly long time to load - I began to Ihink it was a Commodore tape! The resulting program hardly seemed worth all that writing to me. As a 'Pacman' it doesn't have the grace of the original; as an arcade game for the Spectrum today it doesn't have enough originality or quality in the graphics.

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/Z up/down, I/P left/right, quite well placed Joystick: none Keyboard play: fairly

responsive but not sufficiently so in a light spot Use of colour: good Graphics: small, jerky but good maze Sound: reasonable Skill levels: 1 Lives: 3 General rating: fair.

Use of computer	53%
Graphics	42%
Playability	47%
Getting started	53%
Addictive qualities	38%
Value for money	40%
Overall	46%

# Dragonsbane

Producer: Quicksilva Memory required: 48K Retail price: £6.95 Language: BASIC with some m-c Author: Preston, Hunt, Rose & Moore

This graphical adventure-style game takes you deep into the maze of rooms that make up Earthstone Castle, where you must battle with vampires, zombies, skeletons, gryphons and sphinx, among other legendary beasts. All this to rescue the Princess Paula

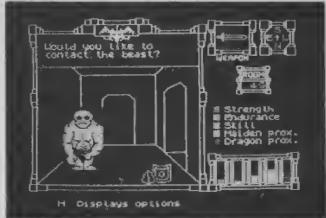
from the Dragons Lord. . There are 172 rooms laid out In a roughly radial manner, so that progressing backwards or forwards a number won't actually mean ending up in the

room next door.
There are 20 duplicated monsters to encounter, some friendly, most not, and you will need to eat food regularly to keep up strength, although over-eating will give you indi-gestion and halve your gestion and halve your strength! Of course, there are also all sorts of useful objects lying about to be poked up when they are needed - if you can work out when that is.

The screen is divided up into a main viewing area in which very simple 3D-style images appear of each room, plus a colour representation of any objects or monsters, and a status area, which gives an indication of the direction in which you are facing, the weapon you are using, the room number you are in and a key to the coloured bar codes beneath, which indicate the amount of strength you have, endurance, skill, and your pro-ximity to both the princess and the Dragons Lord. A display panel above the view screen prompts you with messages like, 'Do you want to speak with the beast?' The view will also clear on pressing key H to show you your options, which are: pick up or drop an object; change a ready-to-hand weapon; eat some food; call up inventory; Look; free princess; and ouit game.

The view area will also clear to give a verbal description of any battles taking place.

Lonely Besst – would like to contact similar for mutual friendship and exchange of beastly confidences. Box CM0457.



#### CRITICISM

'Movement from room to room is done by pressing the cursor keys, which is quite a good idea, although if you press too long you may move through several rooms at once without realising. The computer doesn't say much throughout the game, making the adventure quite boring after a short while.'

'This isn't a proper adventure because the player has little control over the game and there really aren't any puzzles to solve other than the geographical one – where are you? Most moves are made as a result of an option menu. The hi-res graphics make a fine tracery of white detail to tie everything together in a vaguely Gothic-looking way, but it doesn't make up for the atmosphere lost by not having proper text descriptions, and the 3D effect of the rooms is extremely simplistic. Not my favourite type of game.'

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors, plus prompt keys Keyboard play: reasonably responsive Use of colour: reasonable Graphics: detailed crossurer

Graphics: detailed creatures although slowish to appear Sound: poor Skill levels: 1 Lives: 1

Screens: 172 rooms General rating: neither adventure nor arcade, this game falls between two stools and fails to captivate.

Use of computer	55%
Graphics	64%
Playability	54%
Getting started	59%
Addictive qualities	42%
Value for money	52%
Overall	54%

sist of glass balls, a snake called Hiss and a few scorpions. The glass balls drop on to the steps from the top and roll down, crushing anything in their path. The scorpions fly on from the sides and try to sting Pogo, whereas Hiss actually chases Pogo about. The best way to avoid the snake is to jump on to one of the flying saucers that linger beside the steps. Not only will this transport Pogo to the top of the pyramid again, it will lure the snake off the edge to is death—for a while! It comes back soon

enough.

Depending on the screen level, Pogo will have to change the colour of the steps once or twice, there are also a varying number of saucers, which may only be used once per screen. For the first four screens there is only one colour to change, and from screen 5 onwards, two. Bonus points are awarded for flying saucers not used. The inlay states that the pyramid contains 27 steps, which must be a misprint as there are actually 28.

#### CRITICISM

'A well-presented game with a very colourful loading screen and clear instructions. Pogo has the best 3D effect that I have seen on the Spectrum for this type of game. The graphics are excellent and very much like the arcade version—they are fast, smooth, well detailed and responsive, with superb use of colour. The sound, too, is exceptional. It's a well thought out game which is very addictive and which I can certainly recommend."

The characterful drawing of Pogo himself is quite enjoyable, and the detail of the others is well done. Pogo as a game is strongly coloured and the graphics are fast and smooth. It's a simple game idea, and one that works well, is playable and addictive. My one complaint is that the keys are a bit of a stretch. The four directions: directions: are actually diagonals and Ocean have placed them at the extremities of the keyboard. I would have thought the end keys on the two bottom rows would have been a much better solution."

'Pogo is an extremely playable version of the arcade original with high-quality sound and graphics. It's better than Pi-Balled on control with its excellent responses, but I think Pi-Balled has better looking flying saucers. Good control helps to make Pogo very play-

able and addictive and, all round, this is the best version I have seen."

#### COMMENTS

money.

Control keys: 1 = up/left, zero = up/right, CAPS SHIFT = down/left and BREAK = down/right Joystick: good range with Protek, Kempston, ZX 2 on a select menu to which you return after each game Keyboard play: highly responsive, although keys may be awkward for some Use of colour: excellent Graphics: very good Sound: very good Skill levels: 1 Lives: 4 Screens: 16 General rating: addictive, fun and very good value for

Use of computer 84%
Graphics 84%
Playability 89%
Getting started 83%
Addictive qualities 92%
Value for money 92%
Overall 87%



# Pedro

Producer: Imagine Memory required: 48K Betail price: £3.95 Language: machine code Author: Frank Johnson

In line with Imagine's new policy of detailed inlay cards, comes a new super-low price. The Inlay gives detailed instructions on how to play the game, as well as details on the author and his host of helpers which include some other professional musicians Imagine have hired to improve the sound on their games.

Pedro is a sad little Mexican.
At least, if he's not sad, he should be. Trying to scratch a bare existence from the dry soil



Brittlant graphics, ewearing and balls - all part of the fun in Pogo.

# Pogo

Producer: Ocean Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.90 Language: machine code Author: Ronald Rhodes

With a hop, skip and a jump, Pogo is what you might call a second generation 'Painter'type game. Actually it's based on the arcade original 'Q-Bert,' and **Ocean's** version tooks excellent. Last month we reviewed Pi-Balled from **Automata**, and Pogo is very similar. Resembling one of the crystal constructs from the opening sequences of Superman I, the Planet of Steps is the playground on which Pogo must survive. In effect it is a pyramid with 28 steps: hexagonal-shaped steps in 3D. The top surfaces of these steps have to be re-coloured to match the colour shown in a step at the top teft of the screen. To do this Pogo must hop from step to step. When he lands on one it changes colour. He loses a life should he hop off the edges of the pyramid.

Unfortunately he has been pursued from his home planet by some enemies. These con-



That well-known Mexican jumping bean, Pedro, has green fingers and bloody red feet and faces extinction of his garden.

is hard enough without having to cope with hordes of predators. He has a box of seeds, with which he can replace those plants eaten by the nasties, but a local tramp is likely to stroll in and take them if Pedro doesn't stop him in time and frighten him off. Actually the inlay states that Pedro has the most beautiful flower garden South of the Border, and that's what attracts all the animals to come and eat the plants. These include ants, rabbits and cats, among others. To stop them Pedro may jump up and down on them, or he may take bricks from the pile, or compost, and block up the entrances to the garden. The game is over when all the plants have been eaten.

The action is played out on a screen which suggests a 3D perspective, and this is accentuated by the fact that up and down are in reality diagonals.

#### CRITICISM

The game has many key combinations but they are poorly laid out in respect of the speed with which you have to use the pick/drop/stomp key. The graphics are detaited and reasonably smooth but oddly for Imagine, the colour looks primitive. The sound – well the lunes – are fabulous. The game is an original idea but I thought badly executed.

Movement can be very tricky and unreliable, and attempting to make the game 3D is really a problem which makes movement and the game actually more difficult to play. Not my favourite Imagine game at all.

Pedro is a rather odd game from imagine. The screen is in semi-3D perspective view, which makes Pedro move about rather oddly. The destroying of animals by stomping on them is hard due to the controls being difficult to manage. The graphics are good but not exceptional, and there are a few attribute problems with colour. This is not one of

Imagine's best games, although what is poor from Imagine still rates average due to their usual high standards, which I hope aren't slipping. However, the more I played the game the better it seemed, and it did grow on me in a way.'

The game has been designed to be quite hard to play, with so many animals eating the plants. Pedro can only carry one thing at a time so he must decide whether it's to be seeds to plant, bricks or compost to try and block off the garden entrances. But some animals seem to eat bricks as well. It would have been more manageable if the keys had been kinder. Placing seeds (you only have a limited number which is shown at the top of the screen) tended to be difficult because of the perspective angle chosen. Great tunes, but only average attempt overall, with rather distressing use of colour.

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: left/right alternate keys bottom row, down-any key on 2nd row, up - any key on third row. Jump, pick, put – any key on lop row or SPACE Joystick: Fuller, 2 x 2, Kempston, AGF, Protek Keyboard play: very responsive, but finicky in movement Use of colour: average, although plenty used Graphics: detailed, reasonably smooth Sound; game sound, poor, tunes very good Skill levels: 1 Lives: 1 General rating: fair to

average
Use of computer 70%
Graphis 68%
Playability 47%
Getting started 61%
Addictive qualities 55%
Value for money 68%

62%

Overall

# **Adder Attack**

Producer: Mogul Memory required: 48K Retall price: £5.50 Language: machine code Author: M. Smith

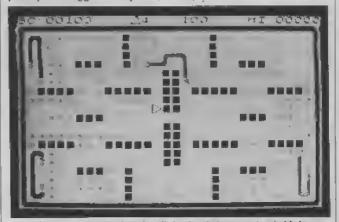
This game is a 'remake' of Postern's Snake Pit, which was also for the Spectrum. The object is to go about the screen collecting gold nuggets. In the various corners are snakes, coiling round and round, trapped by the nuggets. Only one,

the edge over "you" if it coms to an argument.

'The graphics are fairly fast and smooth, although the colours could have been better used: yellow eggs on a white background are hard to see well. Reasonably addictive, because simple, but perhaps not very long lasting.'

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: user-definable, four directions required Joystick: almot any via UDK Keyboard play: reasonably responsive



Squirm and wriggle – your harmless little triangle faces snake phobia in

a blue snake, is intelligent enough to go collecting nuggets as well, and as it does so it inevitably releases the other snakes. They do not collect nuggets, but they will collect you if you meet one head on.

So the strategy is to collect as many nuggets as possible without releasing any snakes yourself, and do it before the blue snake releases them all. Clear a screen and you go on to another one with more snakes, starting with five and going up to eight.

#### CRITICISM

'The game is a very panicky one to play, especially as the snakes are very intelligent – perhaps too intelligent. They are also fast moving. Quite an addictive game where lively reactions are needed.'

Snakes squirming over the screen is not a pretty sight, and these are very last moving ones. I think Postern's Snake Pit looks the better game and has the better graphics, but this version is still very playable. The user-defined keys are good, and the responses reasonable, although I think the snakes have been given

Use of colour: average, could be better used Graphics: fast and fairly smooth, but very simple Sound: fair Skill levels: 4 Lives: 1 General rating: an average game from an older idea, medium addictive.

Use of computer 70% 58% Playability 68% Getting started 60% Addictive qualities Value for money 58% Overati 58%



# Reviews

# Adventures of St. Bernard

Producer: Carnell Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: \$5.95 Language: machine code Author: Stephen Kirk

Here's the chance you've all been waiting for – become a St. Bernard dog called Brandy and rescue your mistress from the clutches of the abominable snowman. The scene is some northern wastelands where he lives a rugged and dangerous existence among the mountains and ice fields.

In stage one, you must make Brandy run along, but he is beset by black wolves from both sides. Turning him to face the attacking wolf at the right moment will result in the wolf's death. Whichever direction he runs in, a wolf will attack from behind. After seventeen dead wolves Brandy moves to the next screen where he has to jump over holes in the ice through which walruses are rearing up. Stage three sees Brandy climbing up to the snowman's lair, leaping over falling snowballs and fighting off the wolves again. Stage four, and we are nearing the lair. The snowman jumps up and down, causing Brandy to slip down the mountain. In stage five there are more pools of water, a walrus and skating penguins.

#### CRITICISM

I was quite surprised when a 3D view appeared in a way that I only noticed after about 5-10 minutes playing – the foreground moves much more quickly than the background. Brandy runs fairly well for a dog with only two legs and a tablectoth looking tail! A transparent walrus takes the theme of ice and cold a little too far, and they are also very difficult to jump. After a short while the entire game becomes repetetive and boring.

tive and boring.'
'The graphics are nice and big and reasonably well animated, but I had terrible trouble getting the dog to jump a walrus. It takes off with encouraging energy, and then



Atta boy! Greb a wolf, leap a walrus and keep the brandy coming.

seems to hover in mld-air, waiting for the beast to come up underneath it. The skating penguins are very good. This isn't a fast game, and the main irritation is in the very slow response to the keys, intended presumably, but not very good as it just frustrates in the end."

'This is quite an original idea with quite good graphics but all in all, not quite good enough to appeal for very long, it takes ages to get through a stage considering what's happening in each one, and so soon becomes uninteresting.'

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: 5 or Z left, 8 or M right, SPACE to jump. Joystick: Protek, AGF Keyboard play: frustratingly inhibited Use of colour: for an lcy game very good Graphics: simple animation against scrolling background Sound: fair Skill levels: 1 Lives: 3 Screens: 5 General rating: a good idea that doesn't seem to have

General rating: a good idea that doesn't seem to have been pushed far enough and represents only fair value for money.

Use of computer 68% Graphics 71% 51% Setting started 68% Addictive qualities Value for money 0verall 58%

well used and the sound is average for this type of game. The keys are well positioned, which is Important in a "Defender." A brill game,"

The game is played with the usual attack waves, each screen bringing more and varied aliens as hazards. The graphics are very fast and smooth, lovely laser blasts and explosions, especially when "you" go for a burton. I was disappointed with the sound, which is non-existent during play, the only explosion sound being when your ship is destroyed."

Lack of sound makes this version a fraction less exciting to play than the Softek one, but I lhought the graphics were actually slightly better, and that makes up for it. The keys are well thought out and the radar is quite accurate. If you like the thrills of a classic arcade game, then this is a very good

buy.

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: T to Q=up, V to Z=down, G to A=reverse, P=fire, Q=thrust, H to ENTER and B to SPACE=smart bombs Joystick: Kempston, ZX 2 Keyboard play: very responsive Use of colour: good Graphics: smooth, detailed, fast Sound: fair Skill levels: progressive difficulty Lives: 3 General rating: very good

Use of computer	79%
Graphics	93%
Playability	93%
Getting started	91%
Addictive qualities	90%
Value for money	85%
Overall	89%

Smooth graphics for Defenda help defeat the pods, swarmers, mutents and landers.



# Defenda

Producer: Interstella Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.50 Language: machine code Author; A.J. Lloyd

Having said in fast month's issue, that after Starblitz, there wouldn't be much point anyone else doing a 'Defender' game, it's always worth being able to say that you've changed your mind if someone proves you wrong, and Interstella have come up with a 'Defender' well worth changing minds for.

It is a classic version with green landers, purple mutants, mine layers, pods, swarmers and humanoids. Your ship is equipped with a powerful laser and three smart bombs. Destroying a lander who has grabbed a human will earn you points, but you'll get more for catching the human before it falls back to earth. Humans falling from a great height blow up when they hit the ground, but they tend to be safe if it's only a small fall.

There is the obligatory radar at the top of the screen and the ship has the customary facilities of reverse and hyperspace.

#### CRITICISM

'An excellent copy of the areade original with detailed and fast aliens. The ship behaves very realistically, especially when slowing or reversing direction, when it slows backwards for several inches before gathering speed in the other direction. Colour is

# 

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#### **ADVENTURE REVIEWS**

Adventures which have a fast response time, are spectacular in the amount of detail and number of locations, and are available to cassette owners ... Simply smashing!" - Soft, Sept 83

'Colossal Adventure is included in Practical Computing's top ten games choice for 1983: "Poetic, moving and tough as helf," - PC, Dec 83

'Colossal Adventure . , For once here's a program that lives up to its name: . , a masterful leat. Thoroughly recommended'

Computer Choice, Dec 83 Colossal Adventure is one of the best in its class. I would recommend if to any adventurer.

- Acorn User, Feb 84 Adventure Quest . . This has always been one of the best adventures for me as it seems to contain the lot, in all it took me about eight months to solve '

- PCW, 18th Jan 84 'To sum up, Adventure Quest is a wonderful program, fast, exciting and challenging, If you like adventures then this one is for you"

- NILUG issue 1.3 Colossal Adventure is simply superb . . For those who want to move onto another adventure of similar high quality, Dungeon Adventure is recommended. With more than 200 locations, 700 messages and 100 objects it will tease and delight!"

- Educational Computing, Nov 83

#### REVIEWS Colossal Adventure ... undoubtedly the best Adventure game around, Level 9 Computing have worked wonders to cram all this into

32K . . Finally Dungeon Adventure, last but by no means least. This is the best of the lot - a truly massive adventure - you'll have to play it yourselves to belive it."

**ADVENTURE** 

- CBM 64 Users Club Newslette "The puzzles are logical and the program is enthralling. Snowball is well worth the money which, for a computer program, is a high recommendation.

- Micro Adventurer, Dec 83 Snowball .. As in all Level 9's adventures, the real pleasure comes not from scoring points but in exploring the world in which the game is set and learning about its denziens. this program goes to prove that the mental pictures conjured up by a good textual adventure can be far more. vivid than the graphics available on home computers.

- Which Micro?, Feb 84 "Lords of Time. This program, writen by newcomer Sue Gazzard, joins my favourite series and is an extremely good addition to Level 9's consistently good catalogue. As we have come to expect from Level 9, the program is executed with wonderful style - nane of those boring "You can't do that" messages! Highly recommended.

- PCW, 1st Feb 84



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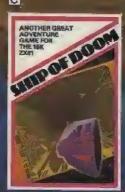
You find yourself strange alien planet. Your aim is to escape by finding your captured space craft. But beware of the little green man who may get to you!



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#### 48K Spectrum 16K ZX81

You have to survive an engine failure while flying over an apparently uninhabitated island in the South Atlantic. Use your wits to harass the enemy, but treat the beautiful native women with respect, to escape from the island and return to an allies aircraft carrier.



\*Tick, delete or complete as applicable.





# Millionaire

Producer: Incentive Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.50 Author: John Hunt

The title page of this new strategy game shows a millionaire's mansion next to a drab looking block of flats rags to riches. When the loading is completed the screen clears and you hear a telephone ringing - could it be fame on the other end?

As a home computer owner, you have written a program and are willing to invest £500 of your own money into marketing it, Can you make it to the top?

First up comes the inevitable strategy option meny - in this case a choice of what the program is to be: arcade, adventure, board game, business/ serious program, educational, management game, utility program, wargame or Other. Having made this decision you are told that every good prog-ram will consist of a) good writing b) good presentation, c) original ideas or d) should maintain interest. You have 20 points and you must allocate the points according to your thoughts on these four headings. When this is done you may choose to market the game yourself, or sell it to a software house to raise more capital. Should you sell there are a few offers (the biggest of a meagre bunch of bids coming from Identive of course). If none are acceptable you can carry on yourself.

The game presents most of the likely problems confronting a small software business and takes in such items as the cost of advertising and duplication. Decisions must be made regarding articles and PR in magazines, raising loan capital at the bank, writing new programs and whether to increase sales by adding short second programs to the other side of

your tapes.

Each month a chart shows your progress, how many tapes have been sold in the month, how many games on the market, total sales, tapes still in stock, and on the debit side - rates, phones etc, total assets and amount borrowed from the bank. Interspersed news items inform you of things such as weather condition affecting sales of games,



or whether a magazine has published an article about your products. If the worst should come to the worst, you can always sell out. . .

#### CRITICISM

'Millionaire has some very neat graphics for a strategy game. Colour is well used for the text to distinguish items at a glance, and the monthly bar chart showing your progress is quite an exciting matter. Every now and then, if you're doing well, you are offered "a chance to reconsider", which takes you back to the first option menu where you can decide on the value of content, presentation etc. I thought this was an enjoyable romp with several grains of truth buried in it!"

For anyone comtemplating marketing their own software, Millionaire may turn out to be less of a game and more a way of life. Given the normal limitations of a computer program, this one seems to echo problems encountered rather well at least, if you've never encountered them before, it might seem to! It does tend to get a bit repetetive after a while, but I thought that was offset by the interest created in seeing your company rise and rise.

'Chance elements sometimes seem needlessly cruel in strategy games. Millionaire has a recurrent busybody who causes you a loss of sales by raking up your past, which has obviously not been all that savoury. But on the whole life treats you kindly in this game compared with some. The graphics are very good, especially the pictures of your company's headquarters, which starts off in a terraced house, and moves onto a more salubrious suburb (I haven't made more money than that yet). I noticed that the scale on the bar chart alters to take into account the sums being discussed. Millionaire may not have quite the depth of options open to a player that some other strategy games have, but I found it all quite compulsive.

#### COMMENTS

Use of computer: mostly numeric keys, all screen prompted Keyboard play: very fast responses Use of colour: very good Graphics: effective text, detailed scenes Sound: average Skill levels: 1 General rating: a relaxing game, and a compelling strategy.

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	76%
Playability	85%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	84%
Overall	80%

# **Brad Blasts** the Galactic **Barbarians**

Producer: Express Software Memory require: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code Author: M. Fox

Express Software is a new company who, in common with some other software houses. have chosen to create a hero around which to set games, in this case Brad. The scenario is set in the year 2025 and Earth is the HQ for the Intergalactic Security Network (ISN). The inhabitants of planet Delta 10 have become increasingly warlike and the ISN have been informed that the Galactic Barbarians who inhabit Delta 10 have developed a super power serum. Brad Stevens has been ordered to destroy the serum.

Brad Blasts the Galactic Barbarians is a game played in five stages. Stage 1 (flight through space) has Brad fighting his way to reach a space station while under attack from enemy fighters, comets and asteroids. Stage 2 (docking) sees Brad trying to get into the space station, which has been surrounded by enemy fighters. Stage 3 (flight to Delta 10) has Brad, now in a new fighter craft, battling through hordes of enemy craft. In Stage 3 (walk to the laboratory) Brad has to defend himself against a scouting party who are all equipped with jet packs. The final stage (inside the laboratory) is a large maze filled with cyborgs, and the walls of the passages are electrified.

The producers are running a competition, details on the inlay card. If you score over 10,000 points and complete the game you will receive a code. You also have to guess the year Brad arrives (he goes back in time) and fill in one of those lines which asks why you picked this year, to qualify. A portable TV is offered.

In addition to the five sheets of the game, there is a very attractive sequence in which Brad's ship takes off from Earth to do battle on the first main screen, Between each stage a transmission at the base of the playing area informs you of what's about to

#### CRITICISM

Brad offers a very lively compendium of games without the usual drawbacks associated with having several different game types on one tape. After a mission control run-down on what you are supposed to attempt, and helpfully telling you it is a million to one you will succeed, your ship takes off. The first screen in this shoot 'em up game is a galaxianstyle one with enemy ships diving down, firing, asteroid frag-ments falling and larger - blue ones - that tempt you to shoot a mistake, as they shatter into more asteroid fragments. In addition, there are flaming comets streaking in from the left at a diagonal. If you clear it, you move on to a screen, where your ship automatically moves slowly up the screen towards the space station's open doors at the top. The Barbarian ships dodge all over the place trying to get you. The third is a fast galaxian-style again, but your new ship moves and fires much faster at the green hordes above. Once landed on Delta 10, Brad is seen on the ground firing up at



what looks like Jetpac men, who are dropping bornos on him. This screen leads to a complicated but simply drawn maze with electrified walls and cyborgs. There are three parts to the maze and different cyborgs in each. The games are all very jolly and well worth playing if you like shoot 'em ups.

'Many different games requiring different skills have been combined into one, making a very playable package. Graphics are smooth, but not terribly fast, and your craft seams to be a little unresponsive. This does add to the difficulty of the game. The graphics have good detail and are colourful. The sound is quite good although basic in the sense that it only signals explosions and so on. I liked the third screen, especially the way your fighter fires its twin photon beams, After a few plays, the introductory message screens become irritating, and it might have been a good idea to have a skip facility. in general, an original plot.'
'This is definitely a game that

needs a joystick, as the control keys are the cursors, which are

rather awkward to use, especially in tight corners. On the other hand, the keys work better in the maze sections than the joystick, since fine tuning is needed to guide Brad through the narrow corridors. Good value with every screen being a playable game.

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors, Ø to Joystick: Kempston, ZX 2, Protek, AGF Keyboard play: a little unresponsive in ship movement Use of colour: good Graphics: generally good Sound: above average Skill levels: 1 Lives: 5 General rating; good, playable, its addictive qualities may wear after a bit

Hen of	
Use of computer	75%
Graphics	72%
Playability	78%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	65%
Value for money	75%
Overall	75%

ferent characteristics: some must be walked into, some flown into. Falling into a lake means instant death.

#### CRITICISM

'Like an adventure, in this game you must sort out what objects to take along with you. The problem is that collecting them means an almost certain encounter with the demonic monsters, whereas ignoring a

amount of energy drain, when making contact with monsters, has been calculated very well, so that even a successful run through the screens will leave you on a knife edge in the last couple. Perhaps not very addictive after a few plays, but playable and nicely implemented with large, colnicely ourful graphics. The movement keys are a bit odd, but as there are only three, not too difficult,"



key or a sword may mean you can get straight through the screen without a problem, only to encounter a door that won't open for you, or a monster that could have been killed with a sword. The screens are all played through very fast, no danger of getting bored with one. Some even take as little as 10 seconds. Good, large graphics and an imaginative use of landscape in some screens make this one of the best and most original yet of

Virgin's games.
Sorcery is a fast-moving arcade adventure game with quite an original plot, and it is carried out well. There isn't much going on in each screen but it is still difficult. The graphics are colourful and well drawn, smooth moving and fast. Unfortunately the responsive keys are rather poorly positioned with left/right positioned one above the other. A good game, and cer-tainly one of Virgin's best."

Once you have sorted out what objects do what and on what screens, Sorcery loses some of its magic (grean). However, the arcade element still makes it enjoyable, and the

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A left/right, Ø Joystick: none Keyboard play: responsive, but poorly positioned Use of colour: good Graphics: smooth, last, detailed, good Sound: fair Skill levels: f Lives: energy drain, only one if you land in the drink General rating: good but lacking somewhere in the content to give it ever-lasting

Use of computer	63%
Graphics	79%
Playability	75%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	77%
Value for money	71%
Overall	72%



# Sorcery

Producer: Virgin Games Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5,95 Language: machine code Author: Martin Wheeler

Sorcery is an adventure arcade game along reasonablye similar lines to that of Alchemist. The earth has fallen into the Dark Ages and an evil Necromancer and his demonic servants have conquered the lands, enslaving the people. But there is stil a ray of hope -You. As the last of the great sorcerers, you must travel from your homefand to Stonehenge, where three fellow sorcerers are held captive.

Sorcery is played out over many screens with trees, lakes and castles. Each screen contains one or more demonic monsters as well as useful and harmful objects such as keys, swords and cauldrons that sap your energy. There are also cauldrons which replenish

Half the trick, as with a text adventure, is to discover what objects, collected on one screen, with do on another. Keys will sometimes open trapdoors on another, without which you cannot leave the screen. All the while you are pursued by the monsters which flit about all over the screen. The Sorcerer can lly and try to avoid them, for any contact will freduce his energy. One problem is that the exit doors on each screen have dif-

CRASH May 1984

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# They Say the World will Die in Fire and Ice

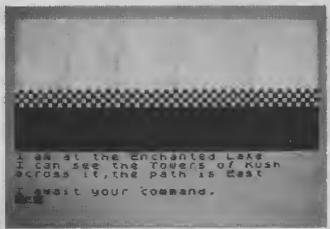
Producer: Electric Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £4.50 Language: machine code

Electric Software dub them-selves 'The People's Company' and aim to produce games at prices people can afford. In fact this particular adventure was intended to be on sale at the amazing price of £2.99, but sadly the cost of packaging had been underestimated, which resulted in the rise. Nevertheless, at under £5 It does represent good value.

The scenario is that you are the Master of the Mystic Arts and the computer is your local disciple Zemlya. The Oracle Orb of Andorra has warned of twin demons of Fire and Ice released by the Nameless Ones to lay waste the Earth. As the Master, you aren't going anywhere of course, poor old loyal Zemlya has to do the dirty work while you watch on with your almost all-seeing eye.

This is the only instruction as to the object of the adventure, much has to worked out by the player. A brief instruction page on screen informs of the usual adventure words which may be used and warns you to experiment. It also suggests you SAVE the game every tew steps as this only takes a few seconds and saves you the botter of starting off from the beginning starting time you lose. beginning every time you tose





The World shall die by Fire and Ice - so save it.

your life (or Zemlya's).

The game starts in the Master's chambers of meditation and there are no visible exits. Also present is the Oracle Orb of Andorra. The first problem to overcome is getting out of the chambers, and suffice to say that there are actually two directions and the method is very simple but not so obvious. Once you have solved this one, the answer to it will provide a guide to many other problems later on.

The game is largely text orientated, but there are also graphics of a simple nature to enliven the already busy pro-

ceedings.

#### CRITICISM

'Once you get out of the chambers of meditation the adventure really begins and takes you to various locations in the immediate vicinity of where you started. where you started. Stonehenge is just down the road, there's a mine, a dark and gloomy forest, a dark pit and the edge of the lake across which you can see the lowers of Kush. It is into these towers you must go to get any further, but you can't swim and you never learned to fly. The computer's replies are humorous and often whining with selfpity, especially when you force it to enter dark mines and pits. Usually its sense of self-preservation should be taken to heart! So the responses are not only witty, but usually carry a hidden meaning as well. Never learned to fly, eh? Coming across a cloak of levitation might be useful, and, indeed, there is one - at least, there is if you can find out how to reach the location where it is hidden. Fire and Ice has you running around in circles to gather objects, drop them in favour of others, come back for them again until you gain entrance to the towers, where more serious into is imparted, and then the game takes on a new angle. You are presented with complex spatial/ mathematical puzzle to solvethat's where I'm still stuck! But so far the indications are that the puzzle will be worth the

solving.'
'Although you are not told the objectives of the adventure there is a lot to keep you occupied. I cottoned on quite quickly that the computer tells you one thing when sometimes it means the opposite. There are some very simple block graphics, but they are not needed. The program is 100% machine code, so the responses are instantaneous, so you can move about very quickly from location to loca-tion. The descriptions are not always very detailed, but the computer's responses make up for most of that. I thought this was a tough game that managed to be quite addic-

#### COMMENTS

Response: fast Graphics: clear text, some simple graphics instantly generated General rating: an imaginative adventure with some unique problems to solve and with plenty of scope in each defined area. Good

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	58%
Playability	84%
Getting started	69%
Addictive qualities	86%
Value for money	89%
Overall	77%



In association with INCENTIVE SOFTWARE LIMITED, we are offering £1,000 worth of prizes in the form of Incentive's brand new game, Millionaire. Two hundred lucky entrants could win themselves a copy of the game, which sets out to let you become a millionaire out of the games software market.

Most of the answers to the questions set out below can be found either in this issue or in previous issues of CRASH, especially issue No 1 (February). If you haven't got a copy of issue No 1, we do have back numbers available now (plug, plug), see our ad. Some of the answers may require a bit of thinking, but then, if you're going to become a software millionaire, you're going to have to do a bit of thinking anyway!

Incentive Software began life last year in August and is run by lan Andrew and lan Morgan. The company's first game was the very successful maze game which 'yippeed' its way into the charts under the name of SPLAT! It was cowritten by both lans and offered a £500 prize to the highest scoring player by January 14th. Hi-scores were all coded for verification and the winner was 17year-old James Tant, of Wokingham. He beat all competition and scored a massive 112,930 points on Splati, which was a formidable achievement considering the game's difficulty. James said his secret was between five and seven hours every day for three months prac-

Before Incentive started, Ian Andrew, a youthful 25 year old, had made his name with another famous game pro-duced by - well, you'll have to look those details up in CRASH as they form part of a questiont Incentive was designed as a software company that would offer incentives in the form of prizes attached to is games, hence the name incentive Software. But the base of operations, a shop in Reading, is named after their first game, suitably The Splat Shop.

Ian Andrew is something of an arcade games nutcase. It search out all the latest video games in the arcades, and I also have a collection of machines in the flat above the shop, he says. These include a Tempest (Atari) video game, a Zaccara Pintable (Ski Jump), an old Bell Fruit Jackpot one armed bandit and a table-top football game. As he points out disarmingly, it all leaves very little room for living space!

Incentive has a policy to get away from the normal run of computer games. know there are a lot of people are slowly getting swamped with splendid graphics shoot 'em ups, and they want something a bit different to get their teeth into, says lan. Bearing this in mind, Incentive have been moving towards strategy adventure-type games like 1984 and the Mountains of Ket trilogy, although they are currently working on all kinds of different projects. Several of these games have come from people who came into the Splat Shop, like Rob Carter (1984) and Richard McCormack (Ket Trilogy). John Hunt, who wrote Millionaire, sent it into Incentive because he liked 1984 so much.

Incentive's next incentive is a video cassette recorder to the first person to complete the Ket Trilogy. Parts 1 and 2 are already available, Mountains of Ket (reviewed in CRASH March issue) and the new Temple of Vran. The final part is due out this summer or autumn,

Meanwhile, it's time to sharpen your wits and put that extensive knowledge of the games software market to good use and win yourself a copy of Millionaire. All you have to do is complete the questions below and send the answers to us on a postcard please to:

#### Millionaire Competition

- 1. By what factor does the American Billion differ from the British Bil-
- 2. Which game did Ian Andrew write and release first?
- What was the software house that released lan's first game?
- Fill in the missing word: 'Who
- wants to be a . . .'
  5. Research rather than mathematical genius should enable you to tell us what is the last number in the series: 95, 70, 74, 85, 75, 90 -
- What have these words in com-mon? NINE, ENTICE, VENT,
- Write another word that goes with those in question 6.
- 8. Who wrote Millionaire?

#### Millionaire Competition

Entries must be received by last post Friday, May 25th and the first 200 cor-rect replies out of the bag will each win a copy of Millionaire.

Crash/Incentive Competition, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire





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MORE & RIGGER HOTLINE PRIZES!!!

Whether you phone in or write in, all names and addresses go into the bag to be drawn monthly. First out will receive £40 worth of software of your choice plus a CRASH tee shirt; and five runners up will each receive three Issues of CRASH free plus a CRASH tee shirt.

#### YOUR VOTE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT — USE IT PLEASE!

#### HOW TO USE THE CRASH HOTLINE

Method 1
CRASH HOYLINE PHONE IN. Ring the number below. We have had to install an answering machine. After the recorded message state your name and address very clearly, spelling it out if necessary (if it's an unusual name) and then state the five games, with producers' names, starting with number 1 down to number 5. Please do this as quickly as possible.

#### THE CRASH HOTLINE PHONE NUMBER IS 0584 (Ludlow) 3015

Method 2

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE-IN. Use the coupon below, making sure you fill in all the details very clearly. Pop the coupon in a stamped envelope and send it to us at the address on the coupon.

DEADLINE

Votes for the next chart must be in no later than 23 May. Votes received after that date will go forward to the next month.

If you use the phone in Hotline, you may have to bear with us -- It's already proving very popular, which means you may well find it engaged when you ring. Try again later, and if all falls use the write-in coupon for safety.

#### CRASH HOTLINE SPECTRUM SOFTWARE CHART

Figures in brackets show last month's position

- MANIC MINER 30 JUMPING JACK (37)Software Projects
  ATIC ATAC Ultimate Imagine TRANZ-AM Ultimate (3) LUNAR JETMAN 32 (23) (31) PSSST Ultimate SPLATI incentive JETPAC Ultimate
  3D ANT ATTACK 34 (25)FLIGHT SIMULATION 35 MAZIACS DK Tronics
- (26)36 TIMEGATE Quicksilva MR. WIMPY Ocean (8) **3D DEATHCHASE** (20)
- CHEQUERED FLAG FRED Quicksilva 36 39 ADVENTURE (8) **HOBBIT** Melbourne
- CREATOR KRAKATOA Abbex 40 House FOOTBALL (14)41 JET SET WILLY
- MANAGER Addictive ZOOM Imagine CHUCKIE EGG A&F Software Projects HARRIER ATTACK 42 (39)(16)Ourrell THE QUILL Gilsoft
- VALHALLA Legend PYRAMID Fantasy (10) (13) (32) 43 KONG Ocean 3D COMBAT ZONE 44 FIGHTER PILOT 45 Digital Integration Artic
- (18)WHEELIE 46 1-1 URBAN UPSTART Microsphere PENETRATOR Richard Shepherd (12)47 48 ZAXXAN Starzone BARMY BURGERS
- Melbourne House SCUBA DIVE Durrell HUNCHBACK Ocean BUGABOO Quicksilva Blaby DICTATOR DK 18 49 (-)
- 19 (15) 20 ALCHEMIST Imagine THRUSTA Software 50 (-1 HALLS OF THE 21 (21)Projects THINGS Crystal ANDROID 2 Vortex

(28) DOOMSDAY CASTLE This month's Hotline Winner is ARCADIA imagine Scott Adams, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear. The five runners up are: (29)SCRABBLE Psion

(22) (48) (34) Alan Hake, Aberdeen, Peter Flynn, Woking, Surrey, A. Wells, Cambridge, Nigel 'Nutby' Best, Leeds, and N.H. Oughton, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos. TEST MATCH CRL PHEENIX Megadodo STONKERS Imagine (24) ORACLE'S CAVE

Please use block capitals and write clearly!	My top five favourite programs in descending order are:	
Name	TITLE	PRODUCER
Address	1	
	2	
Postcode	3	
	4	
Send your coupon to: CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB	5	





DEREK BREWSTER has been an ardent adventurer for some time, and not content to merely play the games, he put his programming talents to good effect and produced one of the earlier successful adventures for the Spectrum, Velnor's Lair, now marketed by Quicksilva. He has also written Starclash and Codename Mat for Micromega. In this issue he kicks off his new regular column for adventurers and introduces our new

ADVENTURE TRAIL CHART.

You stand on a high platform overlooking a spectacular subterranean waterfall. The air is sweet and fresh and the cool refreshing spray pours new life into your tired limbs. But this is no place to relax. A warrior from the last expedition lies slain here and you still haven't discovered the key to the northern labyrinth. Stealthily moving east you enter a large cavern of life-like, almost human, statues - everyone a masterpiece, they must have been moulded by the greatest of craftsmen. But who is he? And who collected them in such a remote and dangerous place? Progressing north you eye is caught by a shimmering light. Moving closer you find a gem-studded trident. gems alone must be worth thousands! Your thoughts are disturbed by footsteps behind you. Slowly turning you hear an insidious hissing sound. Suddenly the words of the Goblin Chief all make sense. Medusal

Can you escape from Medusa or will you become the latest victim to adorn her home? What is the significance of the trident? Is it the key you have been searching for or only a cruel decoy?

Adventuring is an anachron-

You are comfortably seated in a cosy room at a microcomputer and all creature comforts are close at hand. Yet you delive ever deeper into an alien world of dark, dank dungeons and man-eating monsters. Sitting at your micro you are passive and relaxed and yet your mind is in turmoil as your struggle in a seemingly impossible predicament. Often in adventure the explorer has an active, decidedly physical, role.

Although an adventure can often seem to be an endless string of puzzles it somehow seems incongruous to have a computer itself in an adventure. Now that space walks and inter-planetary travel are contemporary issues many adventures find their setting in prehistory or are difficult to place in any time. Surrounded by plastics and man-made fibres in the real world, your only aids in adventuring are harvested from Mother Earth Herself; iron

swords are thrust into beautifully embroidered leather scabbards, warmth is assured with a thick woolly fleece, and brightfy-burning torches are used to seek gold coins. Once again adventures offer us something not readily available in our modern world – hidden treasure that has never seen a deposit account.

It is my conjecture that good adventures are like good novels - they must create a world that is both consistent and believable.

This column is for the exchange of views, ideas and comments, and criticism of games you have played. You may have read our views on the games you have played—now let us know what you think. I hope the column will prove a useful forum for sharing hints and tips. After all, we have all at sometime wished that someone would give us the smallest clue to escape from a prison cell or to cross a bubbling swamp.

So if you are stuck for your next move with any adventure let us know. If we cannot answer your problem we will ask other readers for suggestions.

Large numbers of games are being released each month and the numbers are increasing all the time. Many call themselves adventure games, but this term is becoming broader all the time. After all, no one would call *Planet of Death* or *Snowball* arcade games just because they are set in space, yet many companies call games adventures purely because of a fantasy setting

setting.
in this column I hope to review most of the new adventure releases, revealing what type of game they are and distinguishing those that are worth buying from those that are not!

Any hints, tips, problems or anything of general interest relating to adventure games should be addressed to:

Derek Brewster Adventure Trail, Crash Micro, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB



# CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL CHART

Most computer magazines publish their own charts these days. With only one or two exceptions, adventure games fare badly in these charts. Mainly because few adventurers are stocked by the charts.

We at CRASH would like to produce the first adventure chart. This chart will be based on what you think about the games you have played, not on sales figures. This will give the many excellent games not sold

by the chain stores a chance of charting. This should prove a much better indicator of which really are the best adventure games than does any other chart.

To contribute all you have to do is give the adventures you have played a rating out of ten and send these ratings to us at CRASH. We will then calculate the average readers rating for each game and draw up the adventure charts accordingly.

Voting on the CRASH

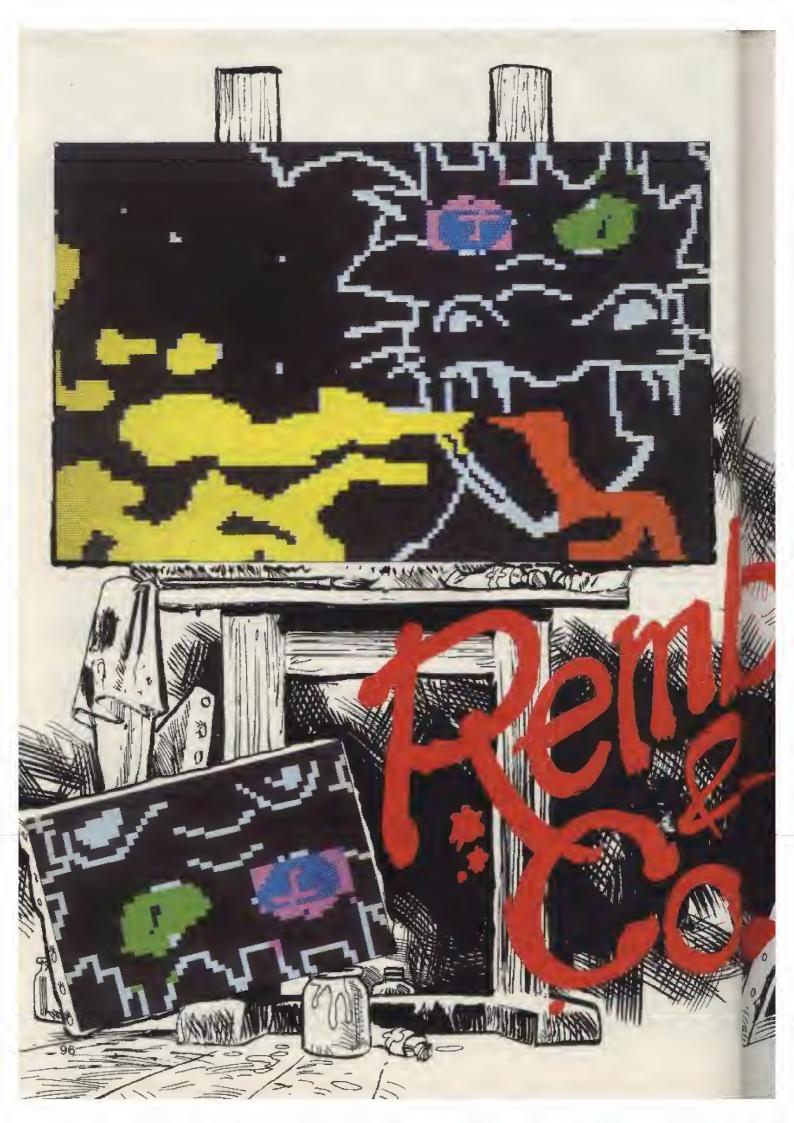
Adventure Trail Chart need not affect any votes you might want to send in to the main HOT LINE CHART, so don't go dropping adventures out of your HOT LINE votes because you also want to vote for the ADVENTURE CHART!

The names of all contributors will go into the bag for a monthly draw and the first out of the bag will win £40 worth of software and a CRASH teashirt, with five runners up winning a CRASH tee-shirt each.

You may WRITE in to us or ring us on the CRASH HOTLINE PHONE-IN NUMBER but please remember to tell the answering machine that your vote is for THE ADVENTURE CHART. The number is 0584 3015

CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL. CHART, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB





Can't stand the penetrating smell of oil paints and terpentine? Are you drowning in diluted, diffused water colours? Forget about paint brushes, mixing pots and smeary dirty hands. The canvasses of the future are VDU or television screens and the crayons give way to flexible utility programs. Today the applications are limited by the lack of affordable colour screen printouts, but this is bound to change in the near future.

Every artist will confirm that the selection of the right drawing utentils is of prime importance, and we therefore examine four drawing utilities now available to the budding Spectrum artist.

C.A.D. from Dream Software Dynamic Graphics from Procom Melbourne Draw from Melbourne House Paintbox from Print'n'Plotter Graphical work on the screen may be subdivided into three main activities:

Background and title screen creation

Creation of user definable graphics (UDG)

Handling of moving graphics

(Sprites)
The selection of the right utility depends entirely on the specific application. Not all utilities provide facilities for all three disciplines: each one excels in one of the tasks.

#### SCREEN CREATION

Screen creating can be a very time consuming job. The basics are simple: set orreset the 49'152 pixels which make up the screen and give the 768 attribute positions the required value. If you provide for every pixel a minimum of 10 seconds for setting or resetting, you will have to work non-stop for five days, 16 hours and 32 minutes.

The colouring works out a fraction fas-

ter at two hours eight minutes.

Obviously there are alleviating factors which reduce the required time enormously. Not all the screen has to be dealt with on a pixel resolution. Text and fill areas can be handled in character resolution. Nonetheless it is of prime importance that the utility provides an expedient and proficient way of performing screen functions without having to go through any lengthy function select procedures for a simple screen manipulation. Added facilities such as diagonal cursor controls, screen magnification, window creation, scrolling, etc, give the user extra flexibility and can prove a very useful bonus.

Melbourne Draw scores the highest marks in user friendliness. This progam provides the clearest logical procedure: screen and attribute handling are completely separated. The screen may at first be edited by positioning the cursor with the eight direction controls and then putting pen to paper for the actual drawing movement. The picture, including the usual edit area, can be created in 'black and white.' When satisfied the attribute edit mode is selected and the identical procedure can take place for the attribute character setting

Melbourne Draw is the only program which allows the attribute cursor to be moved in a non-destructive (pen up) mode. The colour may be selected by simply pressing the correct colour key

(ink and cap shift paper).

Left Top: Small from The Hobbit with a purple eye, Below Left: Zooming in on Small and showing Melbourne Draw's Right Top: A zoomed in close-up From Terror-Dactyl 4D, Lower Right: The title screen of The Hobbit as it should really be,





The first orn has been destroyed. The Black Cry lal of Beroth has been bunished. The alliance of Evil has been defeated by the armies of Lord Fendal. So ends the Third Age. Now we invite you to write your name in the history of the Fourth Age of the Third Continent.

You will meet friends and enemies, old and new, in the long awaited sequel to Volcanic Dungeon. Using high resolution graphics and combining the best qualities of "Black Crystal" and "Volcanic Dungeon" we will allow you to become part of this tale of revenge.

"The Wrath of Magra" comes as three, 48K programmes on cassette, boxed with instruction manual and book detailing the history of the Third Continent and the many spells you will be using throughout the game. For the 48K Spectrum @ £12.50.

NOTE: "The Wrath of Magra" is a complete adventure. You need not buy "Volcanic Dungeon" or "Black Crystal" to play it

Available from Feb 184



CARNELL SOFTWARE LTD



Melbourne Draw also provides a screen magnification facility, which can display a portion of the screen four or 16 times enlarged. This proves to be so useful that all the drawing is accomplished on the enlarged scale. The cursor position automatically dictates the screen area displayed and as a further bonus the entire screen may be pixel scrolled to centre the work area. There are no special draw functions such as circle, rectangle, etc, except fill.

The text mode includes the useful option of writing text in any of four orien-

tations (l/r,r/l,u/d,d/u).

The program is aimed at providing a professional drawing board and proves to be a fast and efficient working tool for the serious user.

Dynamic Graphics allows the creation of a window of any size, which may be positioned, edited and copied anywhere on the screen, thus providing for multiple screens or pattern generation within the screen. Further to this there is a rescale option, which will copy any rectangular area of the screen to any other part with different x and y scale. This can prove to be a very potent feature. Special draw commands such as line, circle and edit are also catered for.

Although Dynamic Graphics is first and foremost a moving graphics utility, its inbuilt screen creator proves to be an exceptionally versatile drawing instru-

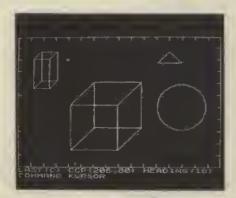
ment

Paintbox offers a Kempston cursor control option with its Precision Plotter screen editor. The inclusion of special draw functions such as fill, erase (last command), circle, radial mode and are together with the option of including any of the 84 UDGs designed with the UDG editor provide for a useful screen tool. The omission of a paper colour control within the screen editor forces the user to go through the lengthy procedure of returning to the main menu for the sake of changing paper colour.

The list of options in the C.A.D. program suggest a very powerful drawing tool. However the basic command procedure







of *C.A.D.* proves to be a stumbling block. Every function is called by pressing the appropriate command key, upon which the selected command is displayed in the information window. The user must then press enter for execution. This is even required for positioning the cursor. This all makes for a lengthy procedure, which ultimately takes the fun out of drawing. Apart from the usual cursor control there is the option of using.

memorised headings, but in practice it is very difficult to make good use of it. The shape creation function, which allows the user to stoe and recall a sequence of drawing commands, proves to be very useful for pattern generation or similar applications. C.A.D. has a complete set of special draw commands, which include among other things triangle, 3D cube and 3D rectangle generation.

#### **UDG CREATION**

Paintbox offers a complete service for UDG addicts. The program caters for four banks of 21 UDGs which can be called into the UDG area for access. The edit facility is complete and practical to use including inverse, rotating and mirror functions. The UDGs are stored together with a M/C routine for calling the individual banks from Basic into the UDG area. A sketchpad is provided for experimenting with related UDGs (multi-character sprites).

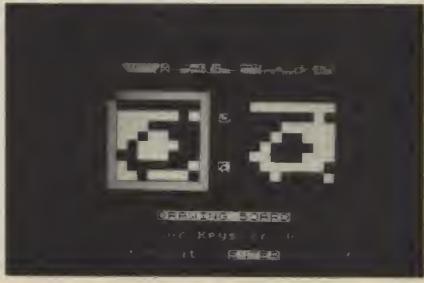
C.A.D. offers a less elaborate UDG facility. Up to 26 UDGs may be edited and stored.

Melbourne Draw has no special editing facility for UDGs but editing is accomplished anywhere on screen using the x16 magnification mode. Any of the 760 character positions on the screen may be assigned as any one of the 22 UDGs. Pixel scrolling may position the required shape within the character grid.

Top: A good example of Melbourne Draw's excellent magnification facility,

Left: C,A,D's special draw commands include 3D cubes and rectangles,

Below: UDG addicts are catered for in Paintbox,



#### MOVING GRAPHICS

Dynamic Graphics is the only program to actually handle sprites and sprite movement from within a user's Basic program, C.A.D. caters for the creation of up to 40 24x24 pixel sprites (3x3 character), but leaves it to the user to inject any life into the screen. It does no provide any M/C routine for fast pixel to pixel movement.

Dynamic Graphics provides the user with a complete sprite animation facility and must be invaluable for the programmer who doesn't want to delve into the machine code labyrinth but requires

smooth animation.

Six sprites of up to 4x4 characters may be generated and edited with the excellent sprite creator. The six graphic characters are treated as individual frames of an animated film and the user may test the resulting motion by selecting the animated display, which sequences the frames on display to create a living object. The character set may then be saved to tape to be called up for later

To integrate the moving sprites without any knowledge of M/C, a sprite user subroutine compiler is provided, which creates a sprite positioning subroutine anywhere in normal user memory. This subroutine can be accessed via Randomize User commands from within Basic. Up to 10 different frames may be positioned consecutively on the screen and the result (if handled correctly) is a very smoothly moving object.

#### CONCLUSION

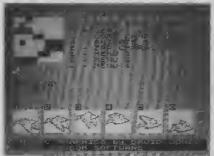
The four programs under scrutiny all have their individual merits.

Melbourne Draw stands out clearly as a professional tool for title and background screen creations.

Paintbox provides the most flexible UDG creator combined with a useful screen editor.

Dynamic Graphics is a must for any-body wishing to create moving graphics within their own programs bothering about M/C handling.

C.A.D. provides a multitude of different facilities for screen, UDG and sprite editing.



Above: Sprite animation avoids delving into machine code in Dunamic Graphics.

Below Left: A boat made from Paintbox's bits and pieces, Right: from Paintbox,

#### THE PROS AND CONS

C.A.D.

Plus:

 Multitude of special draw functions: Line, rectangle, square, triangle, circle, para-llelogram, 3D cube, 3D rectangular box, fill, erase (last command)

Grid display on edge of

screen

Assignment of (A-Z) letter labels to 26 points anywhere on screen for 'Draw by letters' facility
- Shape creation: 26 preprog-

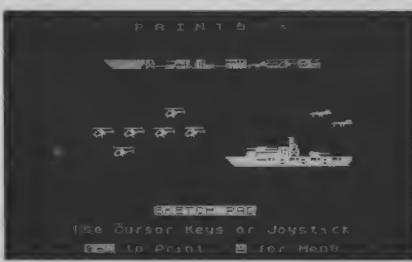
rammable user commands will perform a series of draw commands (=draw routines)

- Sprite generation: up to 40 3x3 character sprites

Sprite generation of up to 40 3x3 character sprites

Complicated and slow draw-Minus: ing procedure (select command and press enter)

Confusing and unpractical heading facility (cursor or preset heading)



#### DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

- Two cursor speeds
- Special draw functions: Line, circle, arc, fill

Window creation with full edit and positioning facilities
 Rescale of rectangular area anywhere on screen

Excellent sprite creation: 4x4 character sprite edit facility including animation experimenting

- Sprite user subroutine compiler: Creates relocatable M/C routine for handling up 10 frame 4x4 moving characters from within Basic

Minus: - No grid overlay for screen creation

- Complicated cursor direction controls

#### MELBOURNE DRAW

Plus:

- Separate screen and attribute editing
- Attribute skip (pen up) mode Diagonal cursor movement
- Magnification x4 and x16 of screen sections

Fast screen handling

- Grid overlay using Bright facility
- Pixel scrolling of entire screen with wrap around Text can be written in four
- orientations
- Reducing and enlarging of entire screen
- Simple UDG creation of any character on screen
- Full screen available for drawing (information window relocatable)

Minus: -Complicated fast cursor movement

 No special draw commands except fill

#### PAINTBOX

Plus:

Two cursor speeds

Kempston cursor control option

Special draw facilities: Fill, erase, circle, radial mode

Excellent UDG creation: four banks of 21 UDGs full UDG edit and handling facility from within Basic

Combined screen and UDG

facility (Screen Planner) Sketchpad for related UDG

display during UDG edit Long-winded paper colour Minus: -



# D NEWS



Joystick in hend, Chris Tarrant hosts The World's Greatest Computer Games.

Whilt the short programme is quite entertaining, it suffers a number of faults. First and foremost it only shows 20-odd games across a range of computers, thus showing the consumer very little in his interest area. Secondly, on screen, Mr Tarrant explains that he isn't very good at playing the games, which rather undoes the claim of the producers that the programme shows you how to play them. The third fault, or misconception, is that seeing a game on a TV screen allows the consumer to 'sample' it. There's no substitute for hands-on-experience.

lor hands on-experience.

TV Choice have also announced their intention to release another tape which will be a computer games magazine. The intention is to critically evaluate new games on the market and back them up by interviews with the people who make the games.

The World's GReatest

The World's GReatest
Computer Games should be
available for sale, rental or merely
on view, in computer retail outlets.

#### **CREATIVE SPARK**

At Christmas electronic giants Thom EMI released live games for the Spectrum. But the company has been unhappy with its image as far as the games market goes, and has now rethought the matter. After some considerable brainstorming, according to Gordon Reid, Product Manager for Thorn EMI computer software, they came up with the name Creative Spark. Thorn EMI is not a good idea for an entertainment brand name, he said, 'and we wanted to get away from the big corporate image.'

The result is twoney games for the Spectrum (reviewed in this issue) and several other for the Commodore 64. Vic 20 and Atari computers. Tower of Evil and Orc Atlack for the 48K Spectrum, are very nicely packaged and retail at 26.95. Both games have been written by in-house programmers at Thorn EM's Wardour Street programming department. Sandy

McKenzie, Manager of Home Computer Software, oversees the department, which consists of 22 in-house programmers at tho moment.

The five earlier games are now being marketed by Creative Spark, but still in their original packaging, with the exception of River Rescue. This will be repackaged because it is also being released for the three other machines. Future plans for 1984 are three more releases during the year totalling eight to nine games for the Spectrum.

Gordon Reid says that they will be keeping an open mind regarding newer computers such as the QL, Americal and spine of the Japanese machines which are soon to arrive on the market.

#### SUBLIMINAL

With sales of computer games slumping in America, software houses are grabbing any gimmick they can think of (better and better games don't seem to enter into it over there). The latest craze is for osychological self-help programs, and one of the most talked about at the minute is Simutech Incorporated's Expando-Vision. For about £80 you can buy an interface and eight programs on disk, cartridge or cassette. This package will then flash messages onto your TV screen at a claimed 130th of a second. At that speed, of course, the eye cannot register anything, but, so the company claims, the brain's subconsciousness does register it subliminally, and the message has an effect.

#### MAIDEN IN DISTRESS

Christian Urquhart has told us that he is busy on a new game to be released by Ocean shortly. Called Cavalon, it involves a knight who must hurtle through mazes to resoue a maiden in distress. There is an evil wizard who must first be sorted out before whisking the happy maiden off to a life of bliss. There's obviously a streak of the romantic in Mr. Urquhart who has already helped Quasimodo rescue Esmeralda in Hunchback.

# THE CUB THAT DOESN'T CRAWL

At last someone has produced a reasonably priced colour monitor for use with the Spectrum computer. Microvitec first showed their Cub monitor at the March ZX Microfair, where it caused quite a stir, it is now generally available. Measuring approximately 14 inches wide by 11 high and 14 deep, the monitor comes in a black metal case which comprehents the Spectrum styling. The screen is 14 inches (across the diagonal). Controls are very simple. Placed at the rear is an on/off switch, a tuner and a

brilliance control. A small flick switch allows you to set up for the Spectrum or to accept a video input from any other TTL compatible computer, or from a video recorder.

It might seem an expensive addition for the games player, but anyone who uses their computer regularly could hardly fail to be startled by the difference in quality between the Cub and their normal TV. The least of the improvements the Cub offers over the telly is the loss of 'brawl.' The colours are a great deal sharper and more saturated, and the entire display has a crystal clarity that many people may have believed impossible from the Spectrum. An additional bonus is that it should make your video tapes look splendid too, although being a monitor it obviously suffers from a lack of sound!

After a week's trial by the CRASH reviewing team, we have decided that from now on all screen reproductions in the magazine will be photographed on the Microvitec Cub. Not all those appearing in this issue have been done on the Cub, but those that have are credited, so you can see the difference.

The Microvitec Cub is now available at most good commputer retail outlets, priced £225 plus VAT.

# QUICKSILVA IN AMERICA

In January of this year the Consumer Electronics Show was held in Las Vegas. Outle a number of British software houses altended the show. We asked Mark Eyles of Quicksitva, to write his impressions for us. Although the show is now long over, the effect that British software is having in America is still very much current, as Mark's report shows.

The flight to the east coast of America takes a whole night, a long time to be flying over featureless wastes of water, the flight from the east coast to Las Vegas, near the west coast, takes the whole day. America is indeed every bit as big as Americans claim, the entire United Kingdom would be lost in a state like Texas home of Quicksilva Inc's head offices and there are over 50 states.

Quicksilva Ltd saw the potential market in America and looked for someone to market its games, various distributors were approached and all found lacking in one way or another and so the right people were sought out to form Quicksilva Inc, a sister company to Quicksilva Ltd. They were Carl Ziegler and Roger Howard, who were found, after much searching, In Paris, They moved to San Antonio, Texas and set up Quicksilva Inc. San Antonio is at the bottom of America mid-way between the coasts and in an ideal position to service the huge continent.

Las Vegas sits in the Nevada
Desert and is the gambling centre
of the United States of America,
gambling is illegal elsewhere in
America so all the gambling is
concentrated into this one crazy
city. Near, Las Vegas is the huge
Hoover Dam which supplies of
cheap electricity which the
Casinus use to turn night into day,

In Las Vegas in January 1984 the Consumer Electronics Show was held, and here Oulcksilva Ltd and Quicksilva Inc gethered to start their onstaught on the American market. At a stand in one of the small halls Quicksilva unveiled its first products, Time Gate for the American Spectrum (the Timex-Sinelair 2068) and Bugaboo for the Commodore 64 were among those games on show. The small hall although small in American terms was the size of three or four Earls Courts, the main hall was of the sort of size where one would expect to see clouds forming and small tribes lost among the stands preying on unsuspecting visitors.



Mark Eyles

Also exhibiting their latest game, Hideous Bitl, on the Quicksitva stand were Virgin Games, who are joining forces with Quicksitva Inc to promote themselves in the USA. The Americans were amazed, they couldn't believe, what they were seeing, for in America you will not find the variety and ingenuity that exists among British software houses, in particular the ones which insist on original games and not straight areade copies. Not only were orders flowing in thick and fast from retailers and distributors but also exhibitors from large American games software houses were coming over to see the games, then going away and coming back with their colleagues to show them and enquire when would they be able to buy them. Quicksitva Inc had arrived after six months of painstaking preparation and America was ready for them.

The internal flights in America are like busest The plane lands, passengers get off and new ones get on and in ten minutes the plane is flying to the next lown and the pilot is saying over the speakers "Hi there, the weather's

lookin' good so you have a nice day y'aw!." In one of these the exhibitors from the CES show flew down to San Antonio, home of Quicksilva Inc, Carl and Roger from Quicksilva Inc, Mark Eyles, Caroline Hayon and Rod Cousens from Quicksilva Ltd and Nick Alexander from Virgin Games. We. watched out the window as we came in to land looking for the Quicksilva offices which are visible from the plane. We landed finally in a clear cool Texan.

The following morning we arrived at the offices and started to sort out the orders and enquiries from the show. Quicksilva Inc is well established and has its own Disk Duplicating facilities, stores and functions 24 hours-a-day. Cassettes are copied by a large duplicating company a mile down the road, the covers are printed round the corner and lunchtime is spent in a Mexican restaurant with Guacamole and Nachos (these are food and not friends!)

The American market is not just bigger than the English market but it is subily different, Americans are not keen on cassettes and where possible everything must be on Disk, Although on the Timex-Sinclair 2068 they are content to use tapes, on the Commodore 64 you couldn't give away a program on cassette! The packaging has to be big, at least as big as video cassette boxes and preferably two or three times as bío

Computer games are sold everywhere, in lact while in America we came across Quicksilva ZX-81 games (from a distribution agreement nearly two years old) in one of the large retail years old) in one of the large retail chains which sprawl across America. It was an odd feeling to travel half way round the world and then find your games on a shop counter, though a satisfying one. Another interesting aspect of American marketing is that wenthing is hought end end with everything is bought and sold with credit cards and money is rapidly going out of fashion.

Quicksilva înc is now going through a rapid growth phase as the Quicksilva name is becoming known throughout the USA, and Quicksilva Inc is expanding to fill a large gap in the vast American market. This growth is not without its' cost though, for instance to advertise right across the USA is phenomenally expensive, adverts aren't quite 50 times as expensive but in some periodicals nearly so, but the rewards and the promise of this growing market make it a must for Britains leading origin at games software house

**MARK EYLES** 

# CHEATS when I read the review of Red

Baron (March). Not only did the reviewer think he was going backwards when looking over the tail of this Sopwith Camel, but he thought (quote): 'It's very disorienting if the plane is behind you, you get a view over the back of the plane. which doesn't seem very realitic.' Eh?!? Would it be more realistic not to see the enemy plane at all?

Oh, that's it. I've just realised why he hasn't been crushed under a juggernauthe never uses the rear view

mirror!

Sarcasm apart, I thoroughly enjoyed Red Baron and didn't find it either 'disorienting' or unrealistic.

Yours faithfully, Baron von Richtoffen (atias Malcolm Higham, Liverpool).

PS. Please donate the £12 to the CRASH Reviewers' Insurance Fund

I said that's enough of Reviewers' problems! Anyway, smartass, how are you supposed to fly your Sopwith Camel if your head is turned through 180 degrees? How are you going to read your next issue of CRASH if your had is turned through 180 degrees - more sarcasm like that, and that's the way you could be spending the rest of your life! Glad you like Red Baron.

#### **FALLEN OUT**

Dear CRASH, I'm afraid CRASH and I have fallen out.

After owning a 48K Spectrum for one week and buying three games off the shelf without knowing anything about them, only to find all three to be poor, I bought four CRASH recommended games and was delighted.

I then told my son that I'd buy him one game per month - the CRASH NEW GAME OF THE MONTH. What do you do but recommend five damn Games of the Month at a total cost of £28.85. Please don't do that again or I'll soon be broke.

Yours sincerely, R. Taylor, Nuneaton.

I don't think I've got any answer to that . . . LM

We've received so many letters from people with helpful hints on how to cheat at Manic Miner that I'm beginning to suspect I'm the only person in Britain who doesn't know how to cheat. Before we go on to that, how about this:

#### RIVER RESCUE

Dear CRASH

I have found a way of getting a very big bonus and get on to the next sheet quickly on Thorn EMI's River Rescue. When the game starts, go about three quarters of the way across the screen. When the dock comes, dock as usual, but after you have docked press keys for back and fire and keep your fingers on the keys until your ship has filled up with nine men. When it is full, carry on playing and then drop your men off. You will now get a big bonus. Now manoeuvre yourself to the centre of the river and wait

You will see two blue strips coming towards you. Go between them (this will take a bit of practice). Now you will proceed to the next sheet.

Your sincerely, J.P. Weaver, Staple Hill, Bristol.

And Robert Thomos, of Cheshunt, Herts, says . . .

I also have picked up nine passengers instead of the six suggested. This was achieved by going forward (by pressing P) and then docking, followed by pressing O and Ø simultaneously the ship picks up another passenger. If you go far enough forward you can press@ and A and this will result in landing at the lower dock

And so to Manic Miner. Now that Jet Set Willy is out, I'm sure no one will mind the following routines appearing. Besides, everyone already knows them. We have received 22 letters on the subject. But just in case there is some frustrated Manic Miner out there who hasn't been vouchsafed some Surbiton occult, here's the jist of it.

First routine is to secure a large or unlimited number of lives. One method says, stop the tape after the picture has loaded, BREAK in, LIST and type: 25 POKE 35136,06%. Then ENTER, type in RUN

and ENTER that and start the tape again. A better method is to type in before starting the load: MERGE"", press ENTER and start tape. When the OK sign appars at the bottom of the screen, stop the tape immediately. LIST and type in: 25 POKE 35136,0 and then ENTER it. Both routines create unlimited lives

A similar routine for a larger but limited number of lives is this: Load for a few seconds until the screen turns black, then stop the tape, type in: INK 7 and press ENTER twice and a listing should appear. Type in: 25 POKE 34269, n (where n= the number of lives you want) and then ENTER. Too many lives slows the game down.

The other main routine is designed to let you play on any of the 20 sheets you want and involves pressing ENTER as usual when the loading is completed and the music is playing, but then key in the number 6031769. A boot appears where the lives normally are displayed. The levels can then be selected by pressing between one and five keys simultaneously. These have been reported in letters quite variously, but the common denominator is the figure 6. When the sheet you want appars on creen, release the keys and start playing. These are the keys which must be pressed

simultaneously: 6 Central Cavern 61 Cold Room 62 Menagerie

621 Uranium Workings

63 Eugene's Lair 631 Processing Plant

632 The Vat

6321 Kong Beast I 64 Amoebatrons I 641

Endorian Forest Altack of the Mutant 642 Telephone

6421 Kong Beast II 643 Ore Refinery

6431 Sky Lab Landing Bay

64321 The 16th Cavern 65 The Warehouse

651 Amoebatrons II 652 Solar Power

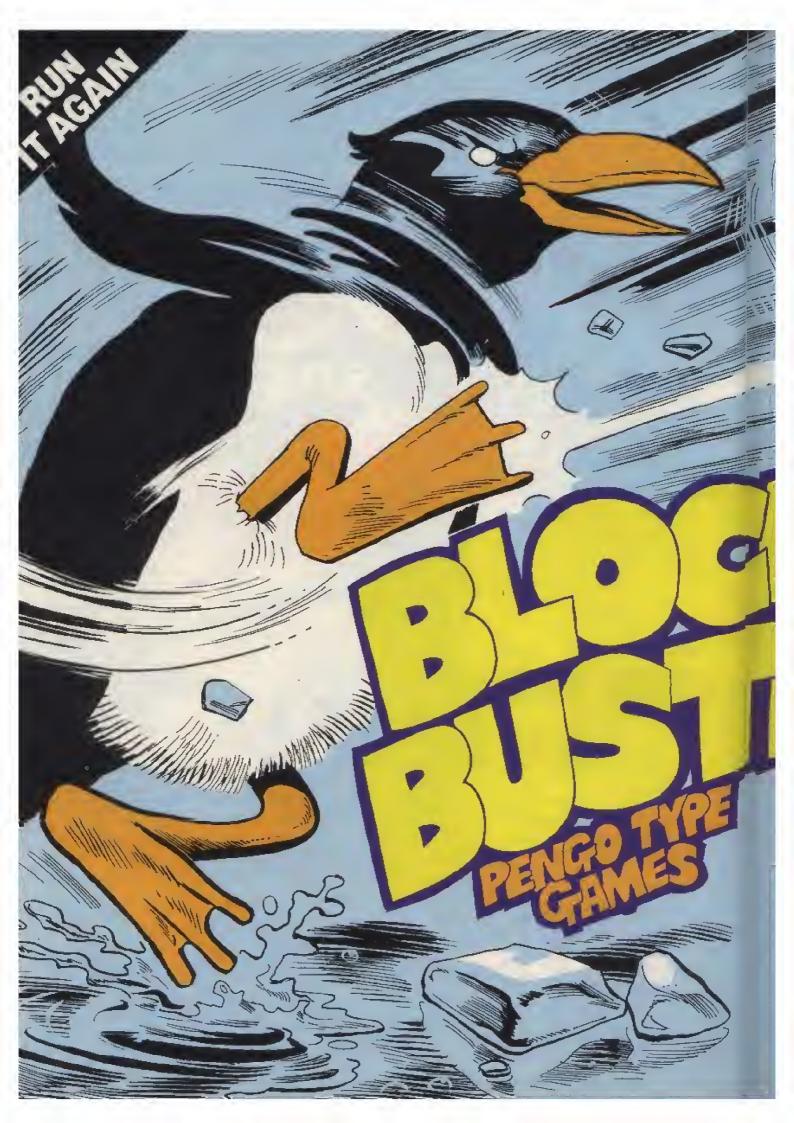
Generator

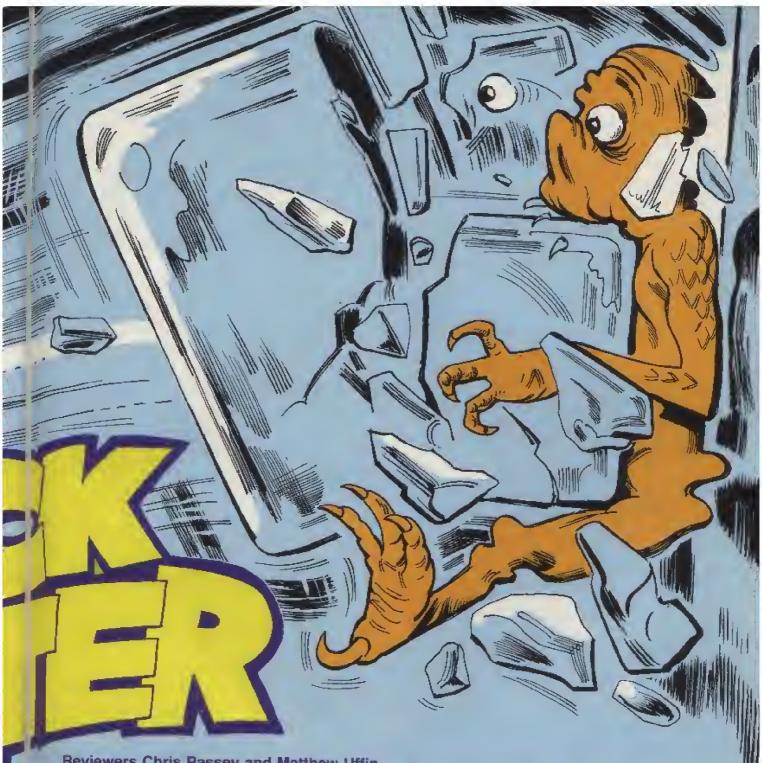
6521 The Final Barrier

If you have any comments on CRASH, or on Spectrum software, complaints in general, playing tips or hints, and especially any adventure tips you would like to share with others, please write in to Lloyd Mangram, CRASH Forum, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.









Reviewers Chris Passey and Matthew Uffindell don their cold gear to play in the Arctic wastes . . .

The Pengo scenario says that a penguin in the snowy wastes must stay alive by melting ice blocks, or shunting them along to squash the snow bugs which threaten him. The frame resembles one of those small hand-held word puzzles with letters printed on small squares which may be shuffled to rearrange them. The game requires a certain amount of strategic thinking in setting up kills. You can usually 'electrify' the walls (the edge of the screen) and daze any nasties that touch it, running them down if you are able. First in the market was Blaby's Dodo and the Snow Bees by a long margin.

# **Dodo (and the snow bees)**

#### Blaby Computer Games

This is a reasonable copy of the Pengo game and it contains quite reasonable graphics too. They are a little jerky due to the character position movement. As with most Blaby games, the sound quality and content is excellent (Blaby sound seems loud tool). As far as sound goes, it's the best, but for playability it's possibly the worst. Keyboard control is bad because is uses the cursors — Kempston, AGF and

Protek joystick owners need not worry though. I found the game average and it has been outclassed on most fronts by others, not surprising perhaps, as it preceeds them all by almost a year and Spectrum software has come a long way in that time. The snow bees in this game did resemble bees, which is more than can be said for most of the rest.

Dodo is the oldest game out of the bunch, and it shows! Movement is by block and slow. The snow bees have a distinct advantage - they move faster than you do. Fences can be electrified four times during the entire game. The screen also seems very cramped. However, the ice blocks move smoothly. The colour is well used. One of the worst points is the keyboard layout, which is exceptionally poor.

sive and well positioned. Each time the fence is electrified the border changes colour, so you can see that the fence is definitely electrified. There are four differently coloured ice blocks which can be pushed together (they can't be melted) for bonus points. An average Pengo but in 16K



### Freez' Bees

# Pengy

#### Micromania

With this game, the title screen provides you with two pictures, one for the game itself and another, which is an advert for Tulankhamun – a bit like being in the cinema! On playing the game I found I had difficulty moving ice blocks with the keyboard. When I changed to my trusty Kempston I found I could by using the fire botton. The game's graphics are okay but a little flickery and the sound, whilst well used, is nothing special. This game is enjoyable but I preferred Freez'Bees to it. Pengy himself seems to resemble a fat Dracula! One thing to bear in mind in discussing the merits of Pengy is that it is in 16K-the only one

The loading time (with its advertisement screen feature) is very short - great. You are a very ghostly looking penguin, out to squash spongy looking intelligent creatures almost intelligent, actually lhey're pretty thick, but every completed another snow bee to the game. Movement of snow bees penguin and Ice blocks is smooth and fast. The keys are respon-

#### Silversoft

I like Freez'Bees and it's a good version. The movement of the penguin is especially good, and generally all the graphics were of reasonable quality. The odd, blob-like snow bees are particularly comical when they lie 'dazed' The odd, blob-like against the electricited wall. Their eyes spin round and round. The sound is good, but again Blaby's is better. The control keys have a decent layout and Kempston owners are catered for. With all its elements and 10 skill levels, this game will never become too easy, but it remains very playable.

Freez'Bees has the most options open to the player, ie you can alter the speed of the game from 0 to 9, there are good instructions, and a useful hold-and-quit key. When pushed, the ice blocks move very quickly to their destination - they also instantly crush the nasties. Freez snow bees are not over-intelligent, thank goodness, but once on your trail they won't let up. The penguin himself waddles about convincingly. responsive keys are well placed and both sound and colour have been well used.

# Eskimo Eddie

#### Ocean

What distinguishes Eskimo Eddie from the others is that it has two totally different sheets in the game. Ocean did this . with Mr Wimpy, and while it gives you two games for the price of one it dan be a bit irritating when you want to get on with the Pengo part. Still, a very small quibble and one which mot people will probably disagree with. In the first sheet, Frogger style, you have to rescue Percy penguin from Growler the bear. There are two bears, slow and medium speed, and three jagged ice which cross and recross the screen. You move from tthe bottom to the top, collect Percy, and then return. This has to be done three times before getting on to the Pengo sheet properly. From here on, everything is like the normal Pengo, with electric fences, bugs and blocks. The graphics throughout are very good and smooth and the sound is about the best (after Blabyl) and I liked the small details like the chasing rainbow effect round the edge of the first sheet. All in all a very good game which gets tougher with each Screen. CP

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One difference that no other Pengo has is that this version has two totally different screens, the first being to avoid moving ice holes and superbly animated polar bears, rescue a penguin from the other side and bring him safely back three times. The second screen then resembles most other Pengo games. The ice blocks move very well, but if you do push a block, all the control keys are frozen (sorry, didn't mean that!) until the block reaches the wall or a snow bug. This does pose problems - the bugs have a chance of catching you while you are stationary. Otherwise the graphics are very good, electric fences work well, ice blocks move smoothly and the sound is good. The snow bees get progressively more intel-ligent as each screen is cleared. A very good game.

# Push Off

#### Software Projects

This was by far the best game in my opinion. It was a little different too, with the ladybird trying to kill garden creepie crawlies (and they trying to get her, of course). Instead of being white, the blocks are a decent garden green. Other changes were bells which, when rung by touching them, meant you could eat the nasties Pacman-style for a while. The graphics are super smooth, easily the best, the creepies have nice detail too. But it can't beat Blaby's Dodo on sound! Key control is good and there are lots of joystick options available. The best of the bunch for me.

This is the only one without a bit of ice in sight. Instead you push/throw garden bricks at four different insects, and you are a ladybird. Apart from these differences it plays very like the other Pengos. Instead of electrified fences there are bells which can be rung and turn the insects to jelly. When you eat a jellied bug a bonus score appears, but the bell only rings for a short time. The action is fast, graphics very smooth (unlike most of the others), characters are large and detailed and very colourful. The keys are good and responsive, and I found this to be an addictive Pengo-type game. MU

#### Pengo-type games comparison table The two reviewers' ratings have been averaged, but despite independent assessment of the games, they were very much in agreement. NB. Despite details printed on cassettes and in advertisements, due to an

orror Software Projects. Push Off is not 16% but 48%. The same is true of Thruste.

Nill Open St. Co. SUUGO A В C D **DODO** Blaby 40 58 51 43 48 **PENGY** Micromania 60 65 66 53 60 16 FREEZ'BEES Silversoft 70 75 80 | 78 | **ESKIMO EDDIE** Ocean 88 90 91 80 85 **PUSH OFF Software Projects** 

CRASH May 1984

106

Programmable
Joystick Interface for the Spectrum

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# Chatting up Your Sweet Talking Friend, The Spectrum

Ever since I made my Spectrum a present of a Cheetah Sweet Talker, it has been grateful and has never stopped bubbling over with Sweet Talk. But then I gave it a Micro Command unit and now it listens occasionally to what I say, not always understanding me, but then again I am quite a difficult person to understand. Strange what a difference an affectionate ear can make...

#### HIS MASTER'S VOICE

The mouth of my Spectrum came with an instruction manual and a cassette named appropriately Chat Box. The mouth just plugs into the rear of the Spectrum. Once Chat Box is loaded, Sweet Talk invites you to its own Chat Show. It presents itself and gets started on a very interesting subject—itself. It won't stop talking about itself... how wonderful it is... and how everybody ought to admire it... That's when I pulled out the plug and got the upper hand.

consulted the Instructions for use. There it was – a simple example program called 'Cheetah.' I immediately modified the program changing the data statements, looking up the phonems for 'Rabbit'. (Cheetah being too foreign), included a loop statement for repeat performance and pressed run: 'RabbitRabbitRabbit-RabbitR

I hit the break key and thought ought to behave more responsibly. After all, there are 68 allophone commands to be output and whoever was listening at port 7 obviously had a more selective vocabulary than my budgie and must think me a right twirp. The extension port from Sweet Talker gave me an idea...

# HAVE EARS WILL

Micro Command is better equipped than Sweet Talker. It comes in a bigger box and has a listening device which would do Terry Wogan proud. I played dominoes with the Spectrum add-ons, plugging the Micro Command unit into the Cheetah Sweet Talker into the Spectrum. I soon figured out where the mike plug was at home and loaded the demonstration tape. Micro Command and I got acquainted. We built up an intimate relationship. I suspected however that Micro Command had a bad ear, as I had to repeat every new word four times in a row before it acknowledged it. Once it got used to my spoken word it would understand me at the rate of seven to eight out of 10. I soon completed the silly

I soon completed the silly game which was supposed to test our relationship and was able to progress to Sheep Talk. Here the originally keyboard-controlled sheepdog Rex, whose job is to round up the lot sheep in the sheep pen, has been replaced by a new Rex with a hearing aid. I soon suspected however that the battery of the hearing device had gone to the dogs – sorry – was on its last legs, for Rex would not obey me no matter how I shouted.

I consulted the Micro Command Additional Information booklet. Two methods of listening are available: Micro Command listens to the entire word and then analyses it. With the second method Micro Com-

mand only listens to the beginning of the word and as soon as it has enough data will make up its mind before the end of the word. The first method may be slower, but error free communication is guaranteed for over 80% of cases. The second method is totally unpredictable, with a success rate of 50% or less. It is my firm conviction that Rex is not only a slow mover but also a fast list

However, I have heard from a good source (an ear at court, so to speak) that this is not so, and that the excitement of the game makes my voice unrecognisable to Micro Command. I apologise to Rex and surrender my position to more stoic shepherds.



#### A MOUTHFUL OF EAR . .

It didn't take long for me to recognise the potential of combining mouth and ear with the Spectrum as grey matter lodged between the two.

Using the Teach program supplied with the Micro Command, I quickly set about using the ear for my very own pur-poses. Teach contains three machine code subroutines, which can be subroutines, which can be called up via User commands. The subroutine st2 will perform the learn function, where Micro Command will listen to the next four words uttered and learn and store them as word 1. The subroutine st1 will now listen to the word spoken and set a variable named aptly 'reply' to the value 1 whenever it recognises this word. Reply is usually 0 if no word is spoken. Subroutine st3 will condition Micro Command for fast or slow recognition. A maximum of 15 words may be stored and can subsequently be recognised. Suc-cess is not always guaranteed as a lot of letters are so similar that recognition is extremely difficult. Having stored 'Hello' and 'Goodbye,' I set about preparing a linking program, which checks when the word Hello' is spoken and then controls the Sweet Talker into saying 'Hello' with the appropriate data statements. Similar for 'Goodbye' and wow - my Spectrum behaves like a parrot! Now, by placing the mike near the Sweet Talker loudspeaker and further program manipulation, my Spectrum will plunge into holding a conversation on its own ... Hey, wait a minute.



## Of Sticks and Tricks . .

Many a games player may have wondered what this mas-sively advertised Trickstick by East London Robotics is all about. The advertisement promises proportional control and patent applied pressuresensitive sensors. Could this prove to be really the ultimate ultra-responsive high-tech proportional joystick for the Spectrum, a must for the Spectrum, a must for the arcade gamer? CRASH set about locking

into the matter and field testing

the unit. . . The Trickstick package contains the hideous control weapon, the Trickstick, together with a narrow interface unit, displaying very shoddy workmanship, and two cassettes containing the software. The User Documentation explains in detail everything you wanted to know about the Trickstick.

The device uses the capacitive effect of the human body to detect the commands of the player. This works in a similar way to the old touch-sensitive switches, but the Trickstick sensor works analogue and can detect varying degrees of pressure (surface and dielectric changes). The Trickstick is blessed with six of these sensors: two at the tip of the unit for left and right movement, two at the upper side for forward and backward movement, and two at the lower side for two independent fire actions.

The documentation gives recommendations for gripping the Trickstick for both left and right handers. The left and right sensors are controlled by rolling the centrally located thumb, while the forward and backward sensors are handled (or fingered) with the fore and middle fingers. The remaining free hand is used to clinch the Trickstick at the lower end and to each for the Fire1 and Fire2

sensor trigger

Before all this can happen the interface, which is compatible with the Kempston interface requiring input port 30 monitoring, has to be plugged into the Spectrum edge connector port and programmed via plug in crosslinks. Up to eight Tricksticks can be connected, each requiring a different port address (7F9FH to FE9FH). Therefore one crosslink selects the port address and the second selects the work mode: proportional or slop and go mode. As the novelty lies in the analog behaviour of the animal, proportional control is selected and the Trickstick Trainer cassette loaded. Prior to play, however, the sensitivity control situated



destroy all enemy planes. Right from the start it is apparent that the Trickstick layout takes some getting used to. The predictability and repeatability of the finer pressure to speed relationship leaves a lot to be desired, but this may well be the result of too fittle training. Nonetheless the Trickstick was immediately rebaptised the Tricky Stick.

second cassette Included a very similar air attack game. The tactic of the game, which starts off with only one enemy aircraft, is to utilise the wrap around edges of the screen to manoeuvre the plane into a firing position and thus gain the upper hand. Once the enemy is destroyed, the game continues with two enemy fighters, then three . . .

The game certainly is fasclnating and demanding, aspecially with the unusual controls of the Trickstick, but

the question is whether the analog control actually is an improvement over the humble microswitch actuated joystick. To this purpose a large selection of games ranging from Fighter Pilot (Ideal for analog control) to Jetpac and AticAtac (unsuitable) were played and tested with both the conventional joystick and the Trick-stick. Various players confes-sed to noticing little or no improvement over the conventional joystick, most grumbling over the unfamiliar and unreforward/backward latable movement of the fingers for the up/down movement on the

The document states that the software should be specifically designed to operate for the analog mode to achieve best results. It also gives an

example as to how the program ought to read the joystick port, but this looks suspiciously similar to the usual digital joystick monitoring. Faster port scanning repetition rates may improve the analog feel if the unit works with statistical coincidences between a variable on/off ratio signal generated by the Trickstick and the pot read period. But this is only guesswork as no technical information is available.

As with all new and unfamiliar devices, opinions may vary strongly over its merits and disadvantages, CRASH would be interested to ehar from seasoned Trickstick owners, if there are any yet, what their opinions are 88 regards the improvement in point scoring over conventional joysticks....



in association with the Guild of Software Houses (GOSH) we are offering readers a service which should prove to be of great value. In effect it is a Consumer Service to help right wrongs and if all else fails to write wrongs as

The past couple of months have been very active for GOSH with twelve more software houses ively more software nouses joining the organisation including Audiogenic, DK Tronics, Widget, Oxford Computer Press, A & F Romik, Artic, C.D.S. and Llamasoft. The present level of membership now stands at 25 and is increasing all the while as more software houses see the benefits of belonging.

A major item on the meeting agendas of GOSH is the serious matter of piracy, and GOSH is actively lobbying for support over piracy in conjunction with other computer trade organisations. As a result of legal action taken by GOSH on behalf of one of its members, a recent police raid resulted in seizure of thousands of counterfeit tapes, illegal copies of programs with cleverly reprinted covers.

In addition to protecting its members, GOSH is also concerned with customer relations and has drawn up model terms of trading. It is in this area that CRASH will be active. We have already received a number of

letters and phone calls from readers who teel they have been treated badly. In some cases the writer had good cause, in some cases a software house has failed to respond to a genuine complaint, and in some cases the complaint was barely justified. A lot of complaints appear to be generated by slow repair times of Spectrums at Sinclair, which falls outside our brief, although ariy complaints will be investigated where possible

Our aim is to act as a between, with the help of go-between, with all problems.

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Very often software houses lack the staff to cope with out of the ordinary matters, and with the

best will in the world delays can occur in processing complaints -sometimes it turns out to be the post! Whatever, we will try and do our best to see that both reader and software house gets a fair deal. If you have any problems and would like us to look into them, write to:

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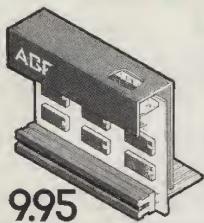
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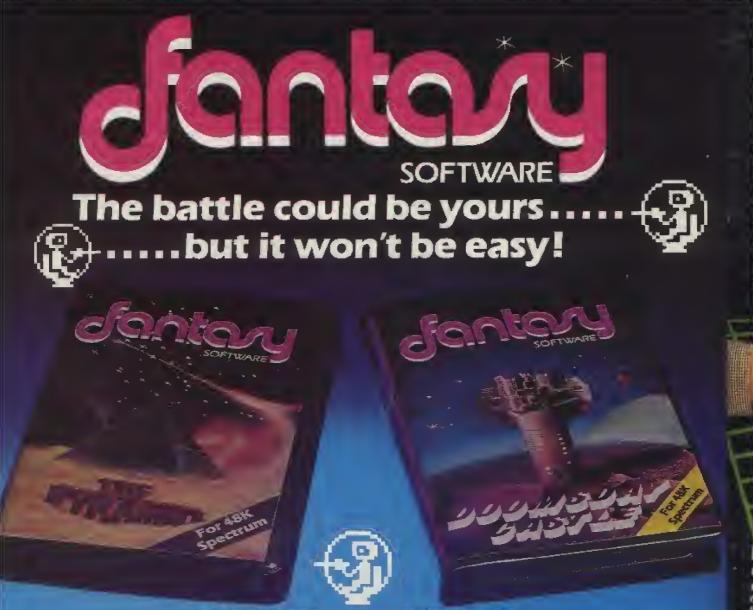
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This is 'ZIGGY', shown above. In his exploratory capsule and is a true representation of the on-screen graphics.

THE PYRAMID
THE PYRAMID is an arcade style game which has a very adventurous

The Pyramid contains 120 chambers on 15 levels. In order to get from one chamber to another you must fight off the indigenous aliens to collect an energised crystal which will neutralize the force field guarding.

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You proceed to explore the pyramid from top to bottom with the difficulty generally increasing with the depth of level. Depending on the choice of exit from each chamber you are likely to have a different game

every time you play. Apart from the challenge of trying to achieve the highest score possible the pyramid contains a number puzzle to solve. The more chambers you successfully visit the more information is gathered to enable you to discover the secret numbers of the pyramid. The puzzle won't take you days to solve, it will probably take you a few months.

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DOOMSDAY CASTLE consists of a law inth of 74 complexity inter-connected Halfs and Passages where you will need a whole host of adversaries serving the infinitely evil Scarthax, the Garthrogs, the Orphacs, the phenomenally nasty Googly Bird and the Urks which manifest themselves in over fifty unbelievably weird and wonderful

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To save the Universe, you must battle your way through the Castle to find and collect the six stones and use their force against Scarthax to

destroy Doomsday Castle, hopefully escaping yourself before the final

cs sk gttabosttteffbstraeckkaptk

catactysmic explosion.

The task is not easy (saving the Universe never is!) and it will take you many games to unfold the structure of Doomsday Castle and discover the locations of the ancient stones.

but the overall challenge should still keep you occupied for months.

FANTASY SOFTWARE is available from W.H.SMITHS, JOHN MENZIES, BOOTS, LASKYS, GREENS, RUMBELOWS, SPECTRUM GROUP, COMPUTERS FOR ALL and all other good software retailers.

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# =Reviews

## **Trashman**

Producer: New Generation Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code Author: Malcolm Evans

Looking for really original ideas in computer games is almost becoming an art in its own right. **New Generation** seem to have come up with another in *Trashman*. Even the cover design is different from anything seen before, with its dirty, over-crowded dustbin.

As a hero, this is likely to be the lowliest character you will ever play - a dustman. Players (there is a one- or two-player option) enter their names at the start and become the Trashman. The object of the game is to walk up and down a street. entering the houses' gardens, collect a dustbin, take it out to the dustcart, empty it and replace the bin from exactly where it came. You must empty five bins in the first road, Montague Road, and do this against a falling Bonus score. When the bonus reaches zero a message comes up to tell you that complaints have been received about your slowness, After the third such ticking off, you are fired!

The screen display is a bird's eye view, looking down on a rather well-to-do suburban estate, with the road down the centre, complete with parked cars and the dustcart creeping up the left side. The road is busy with traffic in both directions. Problems encountered include getting killed by a car, walking on the grass in the gardens (your bonus score drops more rapidly), dogs which attack you on later screens and wayward kids riding their bikes on the pavement. If you meet a dog or bike you start to limp. The overhead perspective view isometric one, showing houses on either side, the gardens, hedges, even the shadows of the houses on this bright, sunny day. On later screens there are also cales and pubs; entering them increases your points, but over-eating or drinking too much will cause trouble. Bonus points can be added to your falling total in another way. Sometimes, after you hve returned an emptied bin, the householder will come to the door and offer a tip for services rendered. The con-



tent of these services is displayed at the base of the screen and replaced with a comment when you leave the house. 'Just give ma ZX81, and I'll control the world,' is a favourite example.

Progressing to the next level (Pulteney Road) requires you to collect six bins. As the trashman's progress takes some time (he's slower when carrying a full bin) he often has to chase after the dustcart, which moves up the road a short distance every few seconds. As the playing area is much larger than the display, and the 3D graphics are quite complicated, the screen doesn't scroll up or down but cuts from scene to scene.

#### CRITICISM

'The first thing to strike you about Trashman is the graphic quality, which is superb. The colours are all bright and solid. but a lot of use has been made of NORMAL and BRIGHT to create the effect of shadows crossing paths and grass. The perspective view is also very realistic and reminiscent of New Generation's Escape, It takes a moment's practice to line Trashman up with a gate, but once you get the hang of it's no problem. You must be careful when replacing empty bins, since walking to the correct spot will result in the bin being deposited. If you happen to hve overstepped the mark, when you turn to lave, you pick the damned thing up again. Emptying a bin into the dustcart is easy enough, just walk up behind it and the emptying occurs automatically. graphics, then, are wonderful, the sense of humour is also very good, and the game is hugely playable. The only thing I want to know is, what really goes on inside the house when Trashman does a favour?'

'The cars on the road are excellent, not only are they detailed but they move tremendously smoothly, at different and the cars of the cars ent speeds, in different directions, and at random intervals. The entire playing area is drawn very nicely. Amusing comments are put on the screen if you haven't trodden on the grass and therefore been able to collect your tip. I like the small touches like the cyclists riding on the paths and the dogs which chew your legs, leaving you limping. Trashman is an immensely playable game that is very addictive at first, but I think that quality might wear off after a while. Nevertheless, it's the best game that New Generation have produced yet.

This is quite a different sort of perspective for Malcom Evans, and it works really well. Great use of grey has been made in the colours, not very common in Spectrum games, All the detail, both in the graphics, the way they more and the game content itself, is very good. I found it playable and fun. Oddly, it isn't a very fast game in the playing, but you soon realise that you must move with accuracy or you won't complete before the bonus score reaches zero. Marvellous value for money, I would say. I don't know how addictive it will be in the long term, but I shall carry on playing to find out."

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors Joystick: Kempston, ZX 2, Protek, AGF Keyboard play: responsive, but more fun with joystick Use of colour: very good Graphics: great Sound: fair Skill levels: progressive difficulty by screen Lives: 3 unless hit by a carl Features: 1 or 2-player games General rating: fun, unusual, high-quality game and very playable.

Use of computer 80% 85% Playability 87% Getting started 86% Addictive qualities 76% Value for money 85% Overall 83%



## Di-Lithium Lift

Producer: Hewson Consultants Memory required: 16K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code and BASIC Author: Simon Cobb

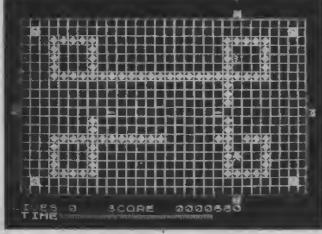
With an obsession verging almost on the pathological (not to say paranoid), Hewson Consultants are again urging us to our zappers to confront the menace of the egregious Seiddab. Having beaten usdown in 3D Space Wars, Invaded our planet in 3D Selddab Attack, they've now gone and stolen our Di-Lithium crystals (and life's hell without a Di-Lithium crystal or two). These vital crystals have been placed in a vault guarded by four droids armed with lasers. You must break into the vault and scramble to get the crystals as the seconds tick by. So much for the scenario, how about the game?

obviously make you work harder. Collecting is done quite simply by moving over the crystals. The droids move fast, and it is essential that you should not stay on a line for too long. At the corners, and in the most dangerous places therefore, are red crystals. If these are collected then the time limit is increased for the screen. The time indicator is situated at the bottom of the vault.

The program will crash if CAPS and BREAK are pressed at the same time.

#### CRITICISM

"Di-Lithium Lift is another version of Transversion, which was produced by Ocean. Comparisons are therefore inevitable. Di-Lithium Lift seems to me to be much faster, which is not necessarily a good thing, as Transversion's pace was deceptive, and anyway allowed you to get further into the game. On each of your lives in Transversion, you restarted collecting at the point you died—another factor which allowed you to get quite a way in quickly. In Di-Lithium Lift each life starts out afresh with



Grids and builets - some Di-Lithium needs a lift.

The 'vault' is a 20 x 30 grid of small squares, character-sized, in fact. The four droids are tank-shaped objects which are situated on each of the four axes, firing inwards along the squares, so there's one on top, one on the bottom and one on either side. Each moves and fires independently, homing in on the line of squares occupied by your man.

The crystals are arranged in various patterns on the squares, the patterns change with each screen, and those containing diagonal patterns

all the crystals back again. This makes it more frustrating. And, I must say, that on the whole i found *Transversion*'s colour scheme a bit easier for playing. On the good side, *Di-Lithlum*'s graphics are very fast and smooth and there is an option for user-definable keys, which is essential with such a fast game.

'Your task is to collect all the crystals on the grid. This is not at all easy because it's a race against time. To help there are the time crystals placed in the corners of the screen, but you

can't get at them without getting shot. It's a very fast game, but that's as far as it goes. The game speeds up and slows down according to the pich of the BEEP. I thought this was an impossible game to play. It looks very like Ocean's Transversion, but that was much

more playable.

'If you like a very fast, very simple game, then you may like Di-Lithium Lift. I say "may because in my opinion the programmer has made the game too hard, stacking up the odds just that bit too much to make it very playable. There are seven screens, but after some hours of playing I haven't managed to get beyond screen 3. After a bit, this becomes frustrating in the bad sense of the word rather than the good arcade sense. Nevertheless, there are probably players who will find this game a challenge worth taking just because it is a tough one.

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: user-definable Joystick: most types via UDK Keyboard play: responsive Use of colour: average Graphics: small block characters, but very fast Sound; good Skill levels: 1 Lives: 3 Screens: 7 with increasing difficulty General rating: fast and tough, perhaps too hard to be really addictive.

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	61%
Playability	57%
Getting started	62%
Addictive qualities	59%
Value for money	58%
Overall	61%

## Olympimania

Producer: Automata Memory required: 48K Retail price: £6.00 Language: machine code Author; Andrew Stagg

Automata, never laggards for a bit of topicality, have taken the noble sporting event known to the sane world as the Olympics, and turned it into a travesty of running, jumping and swimming. The Piman, having recovered from his drunken binge in Pi-Eyed and the bouncing balls of Pi-Balled, has taken himself in hand and is going for gold.

Olympimania offers the average armchair pimaniac not three, not tour, but an astonishing FIVE events in which to compete. The Pijump,

Alpiskiing, Steepichase, the Pitathalon and, for a soggy finish in the Olympi pool, the Butterel

The game takes the form of a platform game (of sorts). In all but the last event, each screen contains four layers. Along each the Piman.

suitably attired for the particular event, must travel, jumping over obstacles, avoiding the faster competitions by jumping and letting them pass underneath, and thus finish the screen. A following screen offers more hazards. Should the Piman achieve a high score (per frame) and get a bronze, silver or gold medal, he may mount the winners rostrum. Between each event, there is a screen set in a crowded auditorium with the rostrums in the centre. Medal winners get to take their places, failed Pimen dash over





On your marks, get set, Go - and the Olympimaniacs are off.

the rostrum to collapse in a fit of tears and ground thumping on the other side, while the crowd behind applaud.

The game is compatible with the Currah Microspeech unit which offers amplified sound and an intoning voice saying, 'On your marks, get set, GO!' It also announces the name of each event in which the Piman is about to take part. The Pijump involves jumping over hurdles while avoiding another iumper and an overflying bird. In ski-ing there are fir frees and the same other mad com-petitor. Steepichasing sees Sees him mounted on a prancing horse with fences to jump and another rider. In Pitathlon he has to leap weight lifters and then compete against other swimmers in the Butterpi. Unfortunately the Piman's swimming lane is monster infested, but he may dive under them once per length. It's all quite silly and charming.

#### CRITICISM

'First and foremost, Olympimania is quite hard, but, most of all, it is fun. A thoroughly enjoyable piece of silliness that actually works as a good game. Timing is tricky, especially when you complete a level and drop down to the next to find the maniac other competitior knocking you off your feet. Needless to say there is also a free hit single to enjoy while playing, as it says, a choral extravaganza The Piland International Anthem, which starts off with Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech. Dreadful!'

Another crazy game from Automata that has no real purpose in life! The game is quite enjoyable at first but then sheer frustration takes over in the struggle to get gold in each. The graphics are very detailed, smooth and fast -but

there are some odd-looking birds! Skill takes a back seat to luck in this game – but then that's what the Olympics are like really! It's great fun to play, but I don't really know whether it's to be recommended as a serious game. Still; if you know Automata you'll probably be prepared to take the risk."

'Each event is nicely done, and I particularly like the between event screen with is animated crowd, and touches like the advertising hoardings around the side proclalming Kempston and Currah. The Piland International Anthem is awful and, as usual, in simply excruciating taste — it'll probably make number one. Good value on the fun level, not really an arcade addict's long-term game.

#### COMMENTS

Controls keys: 0 speed up, 6 slow down, 8 jump or dive Joystick: Kempston Keyboard play: simple and responsive Use of colour: good Graphics: very good, smooth and fast Sound: fair Skill levels; three difficulties by screen on each vent Lives: calculated as the three difficulty levels, ie Bronze, Silver and Gold Features: Currah Microspeech compatible General rating: zany, silly, almot certainly worth it if you're a Pimaniac, generally quite hard, not madly addictive.

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	72%
Playability	68%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	59%
Value for money	55%
Overall	66%

## 4Star

Producer: J.K. Greye Memory required: 16K Retail price: £6.95 Language: BASIC and machine code

4Star is a games compendium featuring Invasion, Kamikaze, Minefield and UFO. The four games are each loaded separately one after the other as you choose to play them.

Invasion is of course what it says, complete with eroding shelters. Kamikaze is a mini-Scramble' with open land-scape and corridors. Minefield has you driving a car around a tree-filled field laying mines.

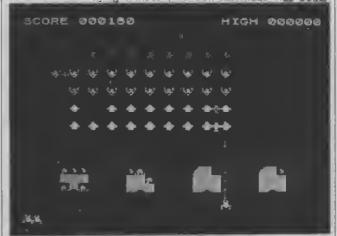


Frustrating Games!"

'Four rather old games here, nothing very startling. The invader is possibly the fastest I have ever seen. All the games have small, very simple graphics and they are all very dated. Even though there are four for the price of one, they still represent very poor value. I would just prefer a good game.

'The Invaders game.'

'The Invaders game is not very addictive and it is hard to control. Kamikaze has better



Superfast invaders in 4 Star,

You must cover as much of the field as possible without hitting a tree. UFO is a shieldless space craft which you must fly down the screen through a host of asteroids. Obviously, as you get lower down the screen, it gets harder to anticipate where the asteroids will appear. All four games were copyrighted in 1982.

#### CRITICISM

'Invasion is a very fast version of you know what. Although it has all the features the graphics are not smooth and the Invaders shower bombs at an unrealistic rate. The program also crashes if you let the invaders reach the ground, and you are then unable to play a second game. Kamikaze is a poor 'Scramble' game with small character block graphics. Minefield is frustration at its best – or worst! UFO is a scrolling ZX81-style game. I think this package should have been called "The Four Most

graphics as far as colours go, but everything is very small, so it's hard to be even vaguely accurate. *Minfield* is a bit pathetic and personally I think *UFO* is stupid. All in all, a waste of time and money.'

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: variable depending on game Joystick: cursor key sticks in some games Keyboard play: not very responsive Use of colour: poor Graphics: very small, fair Sound: above average General rating: generally a waste of money

Use of computer	32%
Graphics	38%
Playability	15%
Getting started	47%
Addictive qualities	5%
Value for money	15%
Overall	25%

## The Quest for the Holy Grail

Producer: Dream Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code Author: Chris Newcombe

This claims to be the world's 'funnyised' graphics adventure. It is 'inspired' by the film Monty Python and the Holy

can contemplate your folly as he batters you to death with a worn-looking. Vic. 20. Finding the Grail is a problem, getting back to Camelot is another, and getting in is yet another. Watch out for the French guard with his distasteful habits—remember, handkerchiefs had not been invented in 932 AD.

The scene is set at the start, where you find yourself in a blacksmith's forge populated by a nuclear powered lamp, a CND picket and a yellow/green key. The CND picket are singing, 'We Shall Not Be Moved,' what next.

You are threng brock forest.

Never mind stinking forest, watch out for guards with their fifthy foreign ways...

Grail, and its cover includes a salacious white rabbit sanguinely licking its bloody chops. For those who have seen the movie, the reference will not only be obvious, but bring chills of fear you may have thought you had been

able to forget! Packed in a sturdy cardboard box, the cassette comes complete with a small, amusing booklet which places you firmly in the correct period, that is 932 AD (after dinner), not 932 BC (before computers). You are Sir Tappin the Basic, a knight of Arthur's round table, and as one of his etite band you are about to embark on the Quest for the Holy Grail, Things aren't going to be too easy, however. One problem is that the peasantry of Mercia are not exactly convinced Arthur is their true and rightful king as they don't readily believe in the 'farcical aquatic ceremony' as they have come to call it, when Arthur attempted to discard Excalibur. Then there's a peasant called Eugene (imagine this a software industry in joke coming) who doesn't like Arthur at all, and therefore not his knights. Bumping into Eugene at the wrong time can result in death for having trampled on an Inagime advert. You

#### CRITICISM

'It is claimed to be the first funnyised graphics adventure. I'm not sure about first, but it certainly is funny, and it does have graphics that are very good. True to the Monty Python style of historical accuracy, linere are lots of details which help to recreate the period flavour like street lighting, motorways and nuclear disarmament. Dying In the first few minutes may take the form of being battered by a computer, walking into a cesspit (authentic) or being snotted on by a guard (nasty).

The adventure itself is quite

'The adventure itself is quite simple in concept but does require the correct sequence of events to happen before it can be fully explored. It is also livened up by the humour and the graphics, some of the best I've seen recently. Not quite up to Hobbit class, but very good.'

'Keep clear of the rabbit!

Keep clear of the rabbit! Those teeth are sharp. The Quest for the Holy Grail is novel because of the humour and historical anarchy, although I thought more humour could hive been wrung from the location descriptions than has been. Response time is medium fast, and it's useful to turn off the graphics. This

doesn't actually speed up the response, but with the graphies on location descriptions appar first and a key press brings up more details, when they're off, the whole lot scrolls up at one time. My overall reaction is that, as an adventure it's above average, but in truth the insert booklet is funnier than the program.'

#### COMMENTS

money.

Response: medium fast Graphics: generally reasonable, some quite detailed General rating: unusual, amusing and good value for

Use of computer 69% 67% Playability 78% Getting started 77% Addictive qualities 76% Value for money 76% Overall 73%

## **Encounter**

Producer: Severn Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: BASIC

Encounter is a classic-style adventure with text only. Your task is to find a young girl kidnapped by thugs, and as the short instructions suggest, 'everything you need is here, but you may have to manufacture some items.' On top of that, it might help if the investigator has some knowledge of chemistry (clue).

Most commands are of the verb followed by noun form. Ominously, you are warned that once the alarm goes off you have only 20 minutes before you are caught. As there are an overall 500 moves to complete your mission of mercy, a map would obviously help. The game starts out from a deserted market souare.

#### CRITICISM

'Quick response times on this adventure ensure a rapid exploration of the locations. I found myself whizzing down alleys into forests, past abandoned cars, into gardens, into a multi-roomed mansion – where I suppose the kidnapped girl was hidden – and all without much sense of purpose. This despite the many items littered along the way, ranging from knives, ladders and assorted coloured dusts and powders which (hint, hint) were no doubt meant to be mixed into some infernal explosive device or other to effect an heroic rescue! But unfortunately the whole place seemed so bereft of life – apart from a dangerously growling dog – that I lost interest rather quickly."

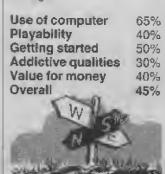
This looked like it should be a good adventure, but somehow the location descriptions are so bare, and in so many all you are told is that you can see nothing of interest, that in the end I thought it felt like a land-scape in search of a script."

"You start in a deserted market square and start exploring. There are lots of unusual things such as coloured powders, hose pipes and fishing nets. The powders must be to make a bomb with, because it is easy to break into the program and in the listing are several references to bombs and bangs. Then you meet up with a dog who eventually kills you. What I couldn't figure out, was how to kill the dog. I typed in "kill dog" and the computer replied, "Good idea," but I never killed him."

'Killing the dog is a good idea, says the computer, but nobbling the programmer might have been a better idea. It's about time software houses realied we expect more from adventures nowadays than we used to, just giving fast response times to input is not enough. Below average.'

#### COMMENTS

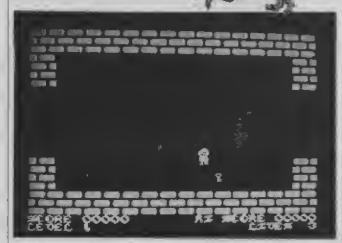
Response: reasonably fast despite BASIC Graphics: text only, blue text on bright yellow background plus tally of moves made General rating: below average



Reviews

## **Tower of Evil**

Producer: Creative Sparks Memory required: 48K Retail price: £6.95 Language: Machine code Author: J.K. Wilson



Loads of meanles, tons of nastles and bucketsful of beastles -

Creative Sparks is a new software company in name at least, in fact it's really Thorn EMI with a new front. They have released two new games for the Spectrum this month. Tower of Evil is a very fast arcade game not unlike Atic Atac in concept. It isn't as complex either in the graphics or the scope, but it isn't simple.

You play the hero, Andros, who has been banished from court until he recaptures the King's treasure from a wicked

Necromancer and his minions. The game is played out in the Tower of Evil, which consists of five floors, each with nine rooms. There are nine treasures to be collected. Each floor contains a treasure, a key and possibly a gobiet containing one of two potions, one will grant temporary invincibility and the other increases the strength of you firepower.

To get from one level to

To get from one level to another, you must be in possession of the key. Red doors lead upwards, and blue ones go down. This is fairly important because there is a chest on the bottom floor, into which treasure must be placed if it's to be kept safe. Loss of life on a floor will mean key and treasure being lost, so it's worth going down to the chest to store it, especially as you get points for collecting treasure rather than for shooting the minions.

Between each floor there are firepits to cross. Andros must run along a floor, leap two pits, move up a level, leap two more and repeat the process on a third before emerging on a new storey of the Tower. At the same time the evil Guardian is hurling fireballs, across the pits.

Each floor has its own dangers, Beelzebubs on the first, which twitter about the place in hordes, trying to hem you in: Valfors on the second which do the same but shoot back;

Xaphans on floor 3; Demi-Clones on the fourth, and flying Baphonets on the fifth. Andros is able to fire in the direction of movement. On each floor the rooms are connected by doors, which tend to be the most dangerous place to hover, since the nasties come flying through at high speed, and straight into you.

#### CRITICISM

The only drawback to this otherwise excellent new game, is the lack of sound during play. A pity since the medieval sounding tune played between games is lovely. Still, it's a small quibble, as Tower of Evil is ultra fast. The speed of the

fair amount of luck. The aliens are not over Intelligent, but you still have a good chance of getting killed, due to the fact that there's so many of them. Finding treasure and the key can be a problem as the aliens tend to pick them up, and they only come back when you re-enter the room. The graphics give the impression of being very "solid", and when you get killed, I love the explosion and the way your molecules all reform about the nucleus again. Colour is used well, but there is zero sound during the game. A highly addictive, fast game.





a warm welcome in the Tower of Evil.

graphics is quite amazing, you can zip about the floors like a mad thing. When a nasty hits you, you explode into little bits, and then you're put together again for the next life. With each floor progressed through, life gets tougher to hang on to, especially as you face the fire pits again, and again, it's fairly simple in concept, very fast and therefore, I think, pretty addictive too."

"Andros isn't very big, but he's quite detailed and jumps with tremendous gusto over the fire pits. These can get very difficult when there are fireballs coming from both sides. Unlike some of the earlier Thorn EMI games, this one has very sensible keys, and it needs them to cope with the speed of the game. A nice feature is that the layout of the rooms and the start locations of the treasure, key etc, change from game to game. Sometimes, there are even butresses in a room which weren't there the time before."

'Another original game has appeared on the market, which requires co-ordination and a

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down. O/P left/right, bottom row jump/fire Joystick: Kempston ZX 2 Keyboard play: highly responsive Use of colour: good Graphics: fast, smooth, generally very good Sound: good tune, none during game Skill levels: progressive by floor Lives: 5 Screens: 10 with nine rooms per screen General rating: Very good, fast and addictive.

Use of computer	85%
Graphics	86%
Playability	88%
Getting started	92%
Addictivity	90%
Value for money	80%
Overell	97%



#### Update:

Co-ordinates unknown. Subjects: Crash survivors from Starliner 'Arcadia'.

Objective: Return crash survivors to Earth, Method: Find and activate alternate space vessel. Result: Invalid method; No vessel available.

# THE TERMINAL MAN







STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL®

DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY®



















SO WHY DON'T





Next: Ritual of Purification...



## Glug-Glug

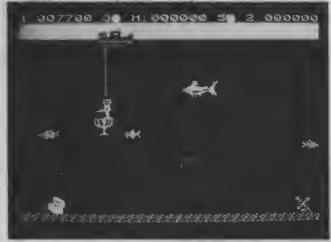
Producer: C.R.L. Memory required: 48K. Retail price: £5.96 Language: machine code Author: Stephen Evans

Under-water games seem popular themes lately. Perhaps computer games are echoing the scientific interests of the late 60s and early 70s where a disaffection with the space race resulted in a development of what was referred to as the 'Inner Space.' Rather than go whooping through the canverns of some far off planet in a laser-equipped ship, we're now diving under the oceans of the computer game to collect valuables from the sea bed.

In Glug-Glug you are fitted out with a hefty deep sea diver's suit which should be protection against all but the biggest giant squids — only it doesn't seem to be! The screen depicts the sky as a thin sliver of pale blue at the top, with your somewhat insubstantial looking boat floting above the black void. The diver is connected to the beat by his life-line and may be lowered to the sea bed. Left and right movement is effected by moving the boat above, with the diver haplessly following.

On the sea bed are several glittering golden objects per screen to be recovered by touching them and carrying them up to the boat, where, by some scientific sleight of hand, they disappear into the boat, so that your diver may return for the next object. He can only carry one at a time.

The sea is filled with wild life: small yellow fish which later gang up into shoals which would make Piranha look tame, squids, jelly fish, sharks and crabs. Fortunately the diver is equipped with a gun to shoot them, for if any touch him he's dead. The crabs are the worst in a way because they linger on the sea bed, below the effective line of fire. The more screens you progress through the more the fish proliferate, until it begins to resemble a zoo aquarium. Floating mines attached to anchored tethers also make an appearance and effectively prevent you from taking advanlage of the wrap-around screen to escape the fishy attentions. Sharks also have the endearing habit of eating through your diver's lifeline,



Jetpac under water in CRL's Glug-glug.

with unenviable results. Scoring depends on how many fish you shoot and how much treasure you recover.

#### CRITICISM

'The Piranha shoals act as though they had a heat-seeking ability, and head straight for you. Graphics are smooth and detailed with some nice animation, and there is a good use of colour throughout. The game has an odd sort of addictive quality—I like it. With each screen it gets progressively more difficult and with 32 levels to get through it should take some time to master. My only criticism, on the negative side, is that the score line is too crowded so it's difficult to see what's going on.'

"Glug-Glug is almost a

'Glug-Glug is almost a marine equipment of Utit-mate's Jet pac, and it does have graphics of a very high quality, especially the explosions, which are very similar to those in Jet pac. A good, reasonably original, game with plenty of levels to play through.'

with a few yellow tiddlers behaving more like goldfish than "denziens of the deep," but *Glug-Glug* works itself up quite fast into a difficult game. The graphics are entertaining and nicely detailed, which makes it enjoyable to play. The controls are well placed and very responsive. I would say that it should appeal on most counts and prove medium addictive."

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: A/Z up/down, /SYM SHIFT left/right, SPACE=fire Joystlck: Kempston and Protek, AGF (cursor keys may also be used, if preferred, by selecting joystick mode on returnable menu) Keyboard play: very responsive Use of colour: good Graphies: smooth and detailed, very good Sound: average Skill levels: 32 progressively difficult

Screens: 32 Features: sound on/off selection

Lives: 5

General rating: well above average to very good, not necessarily very challenging but quite addictive anyway.

Use of computer 70%
Graphics 85%
Playability 84%
Getting started 74%
Addictive qualities 74%
Value for money 78%
Overail 76%

## **G-Force**

Producer: Euro-Byte Memory required: 48K Retail price: £6.95 Language: machine code Author: Boris Baginski

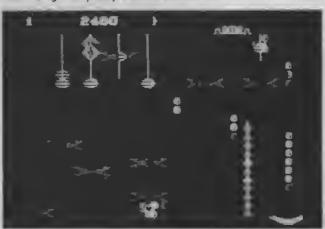
Euro-Byte games have been around for some time, but we have never seen one reviewed. Euro-Byte itself appears to keep a very low profile as well. There are two

games reviewed in this issue, G-Force here, and Pod. Pod. however, appears to ahve been sold to, or marketed through, Visions under the new name of Rapedes, and a review of it can also be found in this issue.

F-Force is a hard game to describe as it fits in with no known categories and resembles no other game we have seen. It is a shoot 'em up - that, at least, can be said. It is played on a grid made up of 10 vertical columns. Your ship is at the base and may move left and right, firing ping-pong balls up any of the columns, at the aliens which drop down from the top. There are six types of alien, although you won't encounter all at once until the higher skill levels are reached. Flippers, a red X-shape, are common and move randomly back and forth as they descend. Tankers, purple diamond shapes, move down a column quite slowly, and if shot split into two Flippers. Spinners, looking like a mini molecular structure mode, are the most common and move down a column at various speeds from slow to very fast. Spikers look like cotton reels on a thread, dangling from the top in a column. They stretch down, leaving spikes which kill at the end of a frame if you survive (the whole grid scrolls down and the spikes will stick you if you remain in a column under one). Pulsars run along the top of the grid and drop deadly bombs, while lastly, Fireballs move all over the screen

Extremely busy bonus screens between frames give details of scores, level reached and aliens to be encountered before a countdown from 10 starts. There are 32 levels to play through.

An unusual game of pure speed - G-Force.



Reviews

#### CRITICISM

'G-Force is, quite simply, the most original shoot 'em up game for the Spectrum I have seen. (It is similar to an arcade game with 3D perspective graphics, although G-Force has 2D graphics.) The graphics themselves are good but not really super smooth. Mind you, this type of shoot 'em up game doesn't really need super smooth graphics to make it work. I enjoyed it, and with 32 levels I think I will be playing and enjoying it for quite a while too.'

a while too. Everthing about this game is untypical of anything. The graphics all look as though they've been designed by someone who is familiar with the Spectrum (obviously!) and yet has never seen a typical Spectrum game before. The result is quite different. The between-screen breaks look more like one of those title sequences from an American TV movie where everyone's name flashes by so fast you can't read them. This results in a needed breather which isn't irritating by being too long. The keys are well laid out and very responsive. A very busy game and very addictive too. G-Force is unique in many ways: firstly, if two-player mode is selected, then each player may enter the game at whatever level they choose, allowing a good player to match a poorer one. With 32 levels of play the game will keep you busy for a month or so. Even level one is fairly difficult to play. A fast action shoot 'em up game with plenty going on all at once, great bonus screens, and a game that can't be compared with anything else, I can recommend it for those with lightning responses and very strong finders!"

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: G/H left right and E/J superfast left/right, 1 and 00=fire Joystick: none Keyboard play: excellent responses, simple to use Use of colour: very good Graphics: very good, large, detailed and more well if suddenly Sound: good

Skill levels/screens: 32 Lives: 3 Features: 1 or 2 player ga

Features: 1 or 2 player games with independent level starts General rating: high unusual shoot 'em up with very good

appeal and plenty of addictivity. Recommended

Use of computer	68%
Graphics	75%
Playability	85%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	88%
Value for money	85%
Overall	79%

## **Moon Buggy**

Producer: Visions
Memory required: 16K
Retail price: £6.95
Language: machine code
Author: Jon Dyte

You are stranded (for some obscure reason) on an alien planet where aliens attack from above and the sides, and the ground is full of holes. Lunar Jetman had to get out to fill them in, but technology has obviously advanced, and the makers of Moon Buggy have provided it with a sort of pogostick underneath which bounces it 20 feet into the air to clear the potholes.

The guns fire straight ahead in the direction of travel as well as straight up. Up above, crowds of aliens jiggle and waft about, dropping bombs in a constant rain, while from either side various weapons cruise just above the planet's surface in your direction.

Should you get hit by an alien or bomb, or fall into a hole, the buggy doesn't explode, but does something more original – a wheel flies off! With each screen cleared, more and varied alliens appear. Also the position of the holes in the ground afters.

CRITICISM

'A good game with quite good graphics, especially the buggy and the aliens. The colour is very well used, with the ground changing colour on each screen. One problem with the instructions – it says LOAD "" when it should say LOAD "" CODE. Quite playable and medium addictive."

'The game has a good use of colour with smooth and very detailed graphics. It can become very frustrating when you are almost on the point of clearing a screen and something goes wrong. It is an original idea, but in the end it is lacking something in content.'

Pity about the incorrect LOADing instructions. The game is very playable, with sensible control keys which are responsive. The moon buggy is well drawn and the variety and animation of the aliens is very good. The flying aliens have a knack of staying near the edge of the screen where you are under more threat from the ground huggers. Moon Buggy also boasts one of the best hi-score facilities I've ever seen. However, it fails to be completely addictive and remains a good, original sort of shoot 'em up.'

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/P jump left/right, A to ENTER=fire, alternate keys on the bottom row for left and right Joystick: none
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: smooth and very
detailed, good explosions and
plenty of variety
Sound: continuous, average
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens: 8
General rating: average to
good, medium addictive:

Use of computer	63%
Graphics	68%
Playability	61%
Getting started	45%
Addictive qualities	55%
Value for money	58%
Overall	58%

## RAPEDES

Producer: Visions
Memory required: 16K
Retail price: £5.95
Language: machine code
Author: Kevin Bezant

If you have read the review of G-Force by Euro-Byte, you will have noticed that we said the other Euro-Byte program was Pod, but that it is being marketed by Visions under the name of Rapedes. However Pod is written by Boris Baginski, whereas Rapedes is written by Kevin Bezant. Are Bezant and Baginski one and the same? Both programs under their own names are availble and a quick glance at the graphics will convince anyone that these two are one and the same program - even if the authors are not! There are a few minor differences which we point out before the Critic-

Flapedes is in fact a classic 'Centipede.' Your ship may more left and right as well as up and down to about one-third the screen height. There are green mushrooms which erode with four shots, a large spider and snail, red mushrooms and, as the level ol play gets higher, falling centipede segments. The centipede itself is made of alternating blue and yellow circles.

The principal differences between Rapedes and Pod (apart from the names of the author) are that Pod costs

Whoops! There goes another wheel! Moonbuggy faces aliens from all sides





A pretty classic 'Centigede' hides under the name of Repades

£6.45, has only one speed (fastish) and a different key layout – a rather awkward one which uses G/H left/right and Y/B up down with T/N/V/U for the diagonals. It does, however, have continuous fire, which Rapedes does not. For collectors of the unusual we would recommend buying both versions!

#### CRITICISM

'This is not a bad "Centipede" version but control is difficult (on both). The graphics are nothing special, although okay. I preferred Pod because of the autofire, especially as this is a long centipede!"

The key responses are very good, but poorly placed keys don't help. The graphics are very fast block movement and detailed, and there is good sound. I thought the copy was a good one and accurate to the original with plenty of addictive quality.

This is a good game which could have been much better if the keys were better positioned, They are hard to get used to because they are all in a row. The graphics and detail for the Hall of Fame are also good.

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: Sinclair keys 6/7 left/right 8/9 up/down, 9 to fire. Eight-directional movement Joystick: Kempston, ZX 2 Keyboard play: very responsive, although awkward lo use Use of colour: good Graphics: simple, but effective with detail and fast Sound: average Skill levels: 5 speeds Lives: 3

Features: 1 or 2-player games General rating: above average to good.

Use of computer	52%
Graphics	63%
Playability	64%
Getting started	64%
Addictive qualities	62%
Value for money	61%
Overall	61%

## SPACE SHUTTI F

Producer: Microdeal Memory required: 48K Retail price: £8.00 Language: BASIC

'You are about to fly the world's most sophisticated flight vehicle," it says in the flight manual enclosed with the tape. This is of course the famous Space Shuttle. Your mission is to take off, park yourself in orbit, move yourself up to a malfunctioning satellite and retrieve it with the remote control arm, then fire the retros and descend back to earth. After re-entry is accomplished you must then land the Shuttle on a long runway in the desert before receiving your

debriefing.
Space Shuttle is more of a simulation than it is a game. The opening screen depicts your view, as pilot, looking out of the shuttle port at the desert outside, backed by mountains. Some cacti and a gantry are visible, the countdown is going. When ignition sequence begins the view scrolls downward as you lift into blue sky, pass small clouds and finally climb into the black of space with a few small stars visible. From the orbit you must move the shuttle forward to make acquisition with the satellite. When this is done the view outside shows the satellite in position nearby, and the bay doors, which may be opened. Then the remote arm may be activated and guided to make contact with the satellite and both withdrawn into the bay.

There is a time limit on this section, after which the arm withdraws whether or not you have acquired the satellite.

Once the doors are shut, re-entry occurs automatically until the view clears to show you the desert landing strip approaching,

The tape is accompanied by a detailed manual. Instrumentation includes range and altitude, propulsion by reaction jets, real-time mission clock, range to the end of the runway, altitude, velocity and reaction jet fuel remaining.

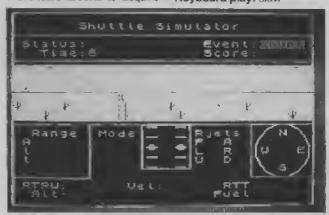
#### CRITICISM

Don't forget that the most difficult thing is to land! The take-off looks quite detailed and is done quite well. Moving the shuttle around to acquire

ple enough, with the only difficulty being that the end of your arm must make contact with the lower point of the satellite. Only landing poses any real problem. All the way through, the simulation is done using so few instruments that it barely deserves to be called a símulation at all. The graphics throughout are disappointing and simple with the drawing of the bay doors and the satellite looking as though they come from a game two years old."

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors, plus =forward, B=back, O=open doors, C=close doors Joystick: Protek, AGF, ZX 2, Kempston Keyboard play: slow



Prepare for shuttle ignition 5-4-3-2-1

the satellite is a very easy per-formance and I do think the satellite could have been better drawn with more detail and colour. Landing is very hard, perhaps too hard. Throughout, the use of colour is only fair in fact, and although the graphics are smooth, they are very slow, and the sound is poor. On the whole the game is of a poor standard and not worth buy-

ing.'
'This game is a little similar
'This game is a little similar Flight Simulation and requires some skill, although how you land I'm not sure, it's quite difficult. The instruments are well defined with hi-res graphics, but the sound is disappointing.

It says there are five phases which require skill. Take-off is all handled by the computer, as is re-entry. Parking the shuttle near the satellite is very simple, virtually automatic; getting hold of the satellite is also simUse of colour: average Graphics: good resolution, smooth, but slow and lacking imagination Sound: poor Skill levels: 1 Lives: Screens: 5 General rating: lacks sufficient detail to be a real simulation, and lacks sufficient content to be better than

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	55%
Playability	50%
Getting started	68%
Addictive qualities	46%
Value for money	43%
Overall	55%

## Pinball Wizard

Producer: C.P. Software Memory required: 16K Retail price: £5.95 Language: machine code Author: Sagittarian Software

Why spend money in the arcades any more? For the modest outlay of the price of this program, you can now play pinball in the comfort of your own home. The layout of the table is quite traditional with a row of 12 bumpers at the top and two collections of bonus targets to either side. These are arranged in a diamond shape with a 20-point target at the top and three 10-point targets beneath. There is a high bonus gate to the left edge of the table, one in the centre and one at the bottom in the middle. In addition there are Hi and Lo targets and two central bumper gates below the scoring window.

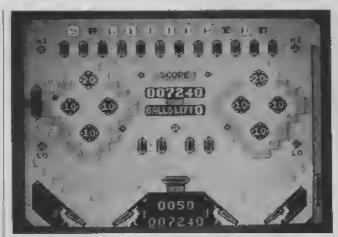
To the right is the ball launcher. Pressing the fire key causes the spring to pull back and then return, and continue doing this until you release the firing key. In this way it is possible to control the strength of the shot desired.

At the base are two sets of flippers, each with an independent right and left arm with exit gates between them. Two more exit channels run at the edge sides of the flippers. The score window looks authentic with the digits flicking up just as they would in a real table. Below that is another window with the number of balls left to the player.

Hitting any of the rollover targets at the top of the table will light the letter above it (S-A-G-I-T-A-R-I-A-N) and any of these targets subsequently hit will increase the bonus by 50 points to a maximum value of a freeball once all the letters have been lit.

#### CRITICISM

'it may not have quite all the thrills of a noisy arcade, but this is definitely one of the best simulations of a table-top game! have seen. Of course, a lot of the graphics don't have to move very much, so it has been possible to concentrate attention on the ball, which moves around with extraordi-



The first computer game for deaf, dumb and blind kids.

nary realism. Using the flippers is simplicity itself and they work very effectively. When I first started playing the game I thought that a few minutes would suffice, and then found that a couple of hours had passed and I was still at it. Excelent.'

'This simulation is fast enough to be enjoyable and addictive. The sound has been well used to simulate real arcade sound. There isn't much going on graphically, but what does move moves very smoothly. Perhaps one aspect that isn't too realistic is that the ball can spend quite a long time playing by itself, bouncing from target to target.'

I missed the opportunity to "tilt" but otherwise I was very impressed with this game. The colours are well used, it has the best effect of a moving ball I've seen yet in a Spectrum game, and it manages to be very additive — not usually the case with these sort of games on the

computer. I would say that as a change to zapping or even adventuring, *Pinball Wizard* has it made.'

#### COMMENTS

Control keys: Q to T left flippers, Y to P right flippers, 6 to zero for launching the ball Joystick: none – none needed Use of colour: good Graphics: large, detailed and smooth Sound: good Skill sevels: 1 Lives: 5 balls General rating: good to very good, and addictive.

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	70%
Playability	78%
Getting started	72%
Addictive qualities	68%
Value for money	63%
Overall	71%

Angal of Death himself appears, and screen 5 brings forth the winged demons and skeletons which steal bits from your circle. The demons require two direct hits before being destroyed. Between games a 12 hour clock face appears and counts down the final few seconds before the game commences.

man. In screens 4 and 5 the

#### CRITICISM

'The cassette box and general presentation is very good, and leads you to expect a pretty good game. The actuality on screen is a bit different. Although the pixel movement graphics are to be commended for their smoothness, the actual graphics are boring, small and very very slow. Tve never seen a game quite like this one before, and I hope I never will again. It's an original enough idea, but its main let down is the sluggish response of the keys. The hellish army moves about well, but colour and sound could have been better. Not a game I could recommend because of

'In some vague respects this resembles one of those older 'Berserk' type games. Machine code and graphics have come quite a way, but I don't think the ideas behind this one have moved much at all. Small characters and slow movement don't improve it. Only the winged demons held me in any thrail, and it's a long wait to see them.'

#### COMMENTS

its lack of content."

Control keys: cursor keys with 9 for diagonal rotation and Ø to fire, or a rather daft arrangement of A/L left/right and X/M up/down with SPACE to fire Joystick: AGF and Protek Keyboard play: responsive but slow action Use of colour: fair Graphics: very smooth but slow Sound: poor Skill: levels: 4 Lives: 3 Screens: 6 General rating: a surprisingly uninteresting game despite the scenario

ETO ODOTTATION	-
Use of computer	58%
Graphics	69%
Playability	45%
Getting started	58%
Addictive qualities	42%
Value for money	48%
Overali	53%

## The Devil Rides In

Producer: Carnell Software Memory required: 48K Retail price: £5.95 Language: Machine code Author: David Abrahams

You are a wizard in battle with the legions of hell. Your defence consists of a magic circle, which you cannot leave, and a talisman to destroy the hetlish army.

In the first screen your magic

circle is surrounded by several ghosts, which float lazily around, firing off the occasional green fire ball at you. Your 'talisman' acts like a laser to destroy the ghosts. The fireballs weaken your strength if they hit you, three being latal. Running into the edge of your magic circle does the same

thing. In the second screen, the scale has been reduced, and small spiders have built a web around your circle to protect the big spiders firing at you from being harmed by your rays. The object is burn away the web so you can fire through again. The third screen has little devils scurrying around the circle, not very dangerous until hit by the rays from your talis-

# Not for the faint of heart

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